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# Military Ethics and *Professionalism*

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*A Collection  
of Essays*

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Edited by  
James Brown and Michael J. Collins

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6) **MILITARY ETHICS  
AND  
PROFESSIONALISM:**

**A Collection of Essays**

(10) Collected and Edited by:  
James Brown and Michael J. Collins

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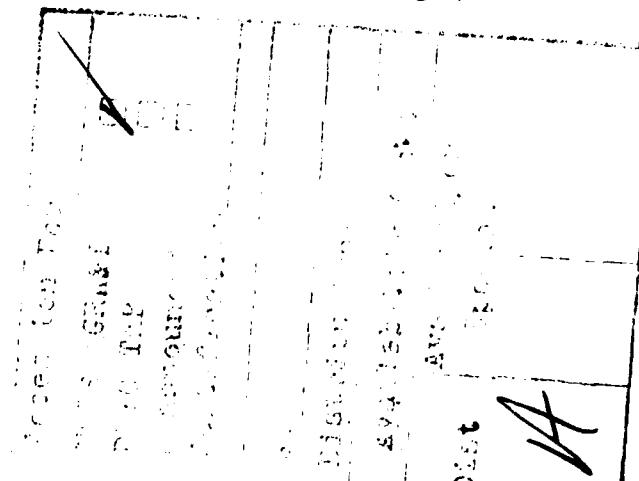
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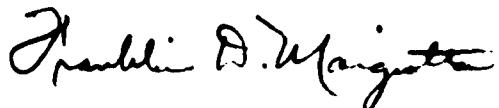


## **FOREWORD**

This second volume in the National Security Essay Series published by the National Defense University Press brings together a collection of authors who approach a single issue, military ethics and professionalism, from very different directions. Although each essay focuses on a different aspect, one senses a common frustration that something has been lost or changed and that the present situation is unsatisfactory.

The first essay is a philosophical look at the ethical patterns Americans tend to develop. The final essay provides a critical analysis of the marriage of high technology and modern management that has produced today's sophisticated battlefield environment and its resultant demand for exceedingly skilled people. These two essays nicely introduce and complete the perspectives developed in the middle three essays. Two of these works attack the abuse of statistics, either as a moral issue or as a coverup for incompetence. One criticizes the recently popular substitution of managers for leaders in military environments.

I was naturally pleased to plan and help organize the conference that fostered the preparation of these essays. While I personally have some intellectual reservations about how far the US military can "turn back the clock," it is important that the perspectives of these authors be circulated. This collection of essays, edited by Dr. James Brown and Lieutenant Colonel Michael Collins, is a provocative addition to our NDU Press publications. We hope our readership will be stimulated to consider an often overlooked ingredient of national defense—the professionalism and ethical standards of a US military force undergoing rapid change.



**FRANKLIN D. MARGIOTTA**  
**Colonel, USAF**  
**Director of Research**

## **EDITORS' PREFACE**

The Inter-University Seminar on Armed Forces and Society (IUS) is a unique organization. Now 20 years old, this loose-knit group of scholars from many disciplines, and of others interested in the military and society, has provided a useful mechanism for developing research into the various relationships between a military and its host society. The IUS has been specially attuned to providing opportunities for the exchange of research insights and to stimulating the preparation of papers on many aspects of the military. A particularly effective technique to generate this research has been the convening of IUS conferences.

Two IUS meetings helped shape the development of this book of essays. In October 1976, the Air Command and Staff College hosted the first conference of the IUS held on a military base; cosponsored by the Air University, the meeting was convened at Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama. That meeting focused on the changing world of the American military; numerous research questions were raised about the evolving nature of military professionalism. Some of these research concerns were codified in a book, *The Changing World of the American Military* (published by Westview Press in late 1978). In June 1979, a second meeting, designed to explore these preliminary research questions, was cosponsored by the IUS and Air University as a capstone to the Air Command and Staff College curriculum. One result is this set of essays.

Questions about ethics and professionalism continue to beset the American military—in some part stimulated by the traumatic experience of the Vietnam war, by the social changes in recruitment caused by the all-volunteer force and its focus upon economic incentives to recruitment, and by the increasing use of modern management methods and indicators of success. The simple military organizing ethos of "Duty, Honor, Country" no longer seems sufficient in a complex, modern world. Or does it? Is it in fact essential? These issues are addressed by the essays in this collection.

The editors of this collection helped organize the 1979 conference to build upon questions suggested in the first gathering and in other IUS-stimulated research. Research presented in 1976 suggested that dramatic changes were under way within the American military and that military professionalism and ethics were slowly adjusting to major social trends. The scholars in the first meeting saw these trends as relatively inevitable, something to be ac-

commodated, and potentially positive in the long run. The essays in this collection argue against those conclusions. Some adjustments made by the military are seen as ill-advised and detrimental to the central mission of combat against an enemy. While the readers, and indeed the editors, of this collection may not agree with all of our authors' conclusions, we believe it is important to provide these balancing perspectives on issues facing the US military today. We are also editing a second, longer anthology (to be published by Westview Press) which addresses manpower issues facing the US Armed Forces.

This collection and the book that will follow would not have been possible without the efforts of many supporters. Professor Morris Janowitz, University of Chicago, must again be given special credit, since his leadership and support as the Chairman of the IUS was essential to these research activities. The Commander of Air University, Lieutenant General Raymond B. Furlong, USAF (now retired), had the foresight to cosponsor the IUS meeting which spawned this collection of essays. General Furlong was extremely successful in creating a climate of open academic inquiry which brought the diverse views represented by this collection to the Air University. We must also recognize a former Commandant of the Air Command and Staff College who assured the efficient conduct of the conference, Brigadier General Stanley C. Beck.

A special note of thanks is due to Mr. J. C. Smith of the ACSC staff who did such a splendid job on the conference papers. The final collection also reflects the diligent work of the National Defense University (NDU) word processing technicians, Laura Hall, Dorothy Mack, and Renee Williams, and the able production and copy editing assistance of Lou Walker and Al Helder. The President of NDU, Lieutenant General R. G. Gard, Jr., USA, supported the circulation of these views in order to make the continuing dialogue about military professionalism and ethics more complete.

Finally, and most importantly, if this collection contains any insights, they are due to the research, creativity, and patience displayed by the several authors. As organizers of the meeting which generated these papers and as coeditors of this collection, we sincerely appreciate their efforts.

**James Brown  
Michael J. Collins**

## **ABOUT THE EDITORS**

DR. JAMES BROWN is associate professor of political science, Southern Methodist University, and an associate chairman of the Inter-University Seminar on Armed Forces and Society. His doctorate in political science is from the State University of New York at Buffalo. He recently completed a term as professor of national security affairs at the Air Command and Staff College. He has written extensively on national security policy, and civil-military relations in Greece, with works published in *Armed Forces and Society*, *Air University Review*, and the *International Journal of Public Administration*.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL MICHAEL J. COLLINS, USAF, is chief of the Military Environment Division, Air Command and Staff College, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama. A graduate of Butler University with a doctorate from Rutgers University, Colonel Collins has served in teaching and staff positions with the US Air Force since 1956. He also instructed in history and served as an assistant professor of political theory at the US Military Academy. A former Harvard Research Fellow, he served with the International Military Staff of NATO in Brussels before joining the ACSC faculty at Maxwell.

## **PROLOGUE**

The professional soldier has always experienced some difficulty in rationalizing his place within the context of a democratic capitalistic society. Machiavelli provided one of the more interesting discussions of the military and society as he analyzed his 16th century Florentine Republic, but the problem really became of general concern after the American and French Revolutions. In the United States, the matter was fairly well resolved in the early 19th century and was not widely discussed again until the 1950s when it first appeared that the country would need a large standing military force and conscription for a long period. This reality led to considerable public and academic discussion of the soldier and the state, the "military-industrial complex," and fictional literature on a possible coup d'état or a nuclear war. Nevertheless, in the 1950s, the American military establishment was still firmly in the hands of generals and politicians whose attitudes about the military had been shaped largely by the traditions and political philosophies of the 19th century.

Three recent developments have dramatically affected the role of the professional soldier, and neither the military nor the society at large has, as yet, completely adjusted to them. The first event was the Vietnam war, a traumatic experience for both the military and the society. The military discovered that it did not have the support of the American people while it engaged in a war. In fact, it seemed to be defending the interests of a Nation that hated the military. Soldiers were insulted on the streets; ROTC buildings were bombed and burned; and the media seemed to delight in exhaustive coverage of seemingly endless antimilitary demonstrations. These and other events shattered the professional soldier's image of himself as an individual who willingly followed a demanding and relatively low-paying career in the service of the Nation and its democratic ideals. He will probably never rebuild that image completely. The basis of that whole model of military professionalism was the Nation's respect and appreciation.

This viewpoint was also affected by other elements of the Vietnam era: military scandals; instances of junior officers and NCOs lying on reports; shootings and mistreatment of prisoners of war; financial corruption; fraggings (murder) of officers; drug use and addiction; and a general decline in traditional military discipline. It made no difference whether this environment resulted from the pressures of the war or was merely a reflection of lower standards in American

society. The impact was the same—it further reduced the dwindling reserve of self-respect so necessary to the professional image.

A second development of the 1970s was the advent of the All-Volunteer Force, the impact of which is not yet even partially understood. The All-Volunteer Force is not necessarily the same as a mercenary force. Prior to World War II, the United States had always relied on an All-Volunteer Force, and another important power, Great Britain, relies on such forces. After Vietnam, the national leadership assumed that large military forces could be sustained by an occupational appeal; this view was based upon an unwillingness to draft and was a response to the demands of a materialistic American culture, the increased technical skills required of today's military personnel, and the nature of the modern job market. This approach has resulted in the recruitment of differently-motivated young enlisted men and officers who expect fringe benefits and pay raises as a matter of right, who sue in court (and win) when they cannot satisfy the terms of their enlistment contracts, who show questionable fighting instincts, and, most important, who seem to possess few, if any, of the attitudes so closely associated with military professionalism in the past. Much of scholarly literature and surveys cited in the following essays grapple with these and other attitudes that tend to perceive the military more as an occupation than as a profession.

Another recent development affecting professional military attitudes is the vastly increased number of women in the service—not only women, but "liberated" women. Since the beginning of recorded history, with few exceptions, the military had been a macho, male-dominated institution that appealed primarily to a segment of the male population that held the qualities and characteristics of virility in high regard. The entry of women into virtually every military career field and into the military academies has had subtle, and as yet unfathomable, impact on the profession. Much has been written about the need to educate these culturally-biased attitudes out of the men, but this is not so easily done. Even if such attitudes are cultural, it will take generations to "educate them out of men," especially in a society that is still divided on whether they are good or bad, or even necessary to defend an evolving civilization.

The five essays that follow were prepared for a June 1979 conference cosponsored by the Air University and the Inter-University Seminar on Armed Forces and Society and deal with aspects of evolving military professionalism. There is no attempt to cover every detail of the issue. Rather, each essay focuses closely on matters that the

authors considered most important in the light of their own study and experience. The common thread shared by all is that each author is aware that something has been lost or changed and that the earlier professionalism is now only a subject for study in history books. Another unifying theme is that the present situation is unsatisfactory. Adaptation to new realities is required. A return to more traditional views of professionalism may be important if the military is to retain its unique essence, namely the requirement to face the rigors of combat.

The first three essays treat the question of professional ethics. The authors discuss a question that is basic to any profession, but ethics is especially important to the military because it is complicated by issues related to combat, prisoners, chain of command discipline, the killing of civilian noncombatants, and international laws of armed conflict. The question of military ethics is as important today as at any time in the history of American arms. Moreover, as Kelly points out, ethical problems affect the various professions differently. "Other professions suffer mainly in the services they render, that is, in their relationships outside the profession, but the army seems to suffer internally . . ."

In the first essay, Sam C. Sarkesian takes the question of professional ethics to a high level of abstraction in an area where there are no absolutes; military ethical attitudes not only evolve from the larger sense of humanity, but also from the constantly changing civilian political and social structure. He examines some of the basic ethical concepts that have become accepted by civilized man and superimposes the professional military ethical responsibilities on that structure. Instead of dealing with ethical principles, he speaks more in terms of ethical patterns that develop over one's lifetime. The great questions of ethical behavior do not have specific answers, but the military must address such questions in the interest of its own ethical codes.

\* The essay by Thomas E. Kelly is a brief case study that summarizes the results of several other studies dealing with a relatively new phenomenon that has a direct impact on professionalism and military ethics. The increased use of statistics in the traditional military reporting and evaluating techniques to assess officer effectiveness has had a detrimental impact on professional ethics. Although Kelly limits his discussion to the Army, the other services confront similar situations. After the paper was presented at the Air University conference, it was in great demand and has already been widely circulated in unpublished form because it brings a particularly

widespread moral problem into a very sharp focus. Kelly's work contains an analysis of a moral issue that is "eating away at the very entrails" of the profession.

The essay by Lewis Sorley also touches on the problem of over-emphasizing statistical indicators, not so much as an ethical problem in itself, but as a coverup for incompetence. Sorley argues that, at some point, a lack of professional competence itself becomes immoral but total reliance on statistical reporting makes it almost impossible to evaluate an officer's *real* competence as a professional. Military history is replete with examples of commanders who were incompetent to the point that they were immoral. When a pilot bombs the wrong village because he failed to learn how to read a map correctly or when a platoon leader leads his men into an obvious trap because he never studied his tactics, both individuals can be viewed as immoral. But Sorley describes recent developments that may mark the whole profession as incompetent. He first identifies some of the fundamental ingredients of professional competence and then explains how recent military policies, practices, and procedures have eroded that competence.

The essay by Richard Gabriel examines another problem that is relatively new to the profession of arms, the impact of new "organizational forms." After World War II, the military adopted many management practices of American business and industry and replaced earlier leadership concepts that stressed psychic and ritualistic rewards based on recognition of the individual's contribution to his unit. The older leadership system served the military well, but it was difficult to argue its strengths in comparison with the efficiency of modern industrial and bureaucratic management systems. These systems are basically driven by the profit motive—getting more for the dollar—but soldiers in combat do not fight for profits. Without the motivation that characterized earlier professionals, soldiers in Vietnam were reluctant to fight for "ticket-punching" officers who rotated every six months and for a system that treated them as expendable resources in some giant pipeline.

Gabriel suggests that the norms of business and industrial management may be more appropriate to the Air Force and Navy, but they are a disaster for the Army. However, many officers in these sister services disagree with Gabriel. Traditions, myths, emotions, and heroic leadership are the mainstay of any fighting unit. Although Professor Gabriel's essay has an emotional ring, all who have ever been in combat will understand his argument, whether or not they

agree with his broadside. American business corporations are not designed to fight wars. Thus, in most instances, the organizational and motivational systems used in the business world may be inappropriate when superimposed on certain parts of the military. Americans do not often return to earlier systems and often perceive a return to tradition as retrogression. Nevertheless, as more military decisionmakers consider the problem, they may decide that the services should recapture some aspects of the older professionalism.

In the fifth essay, John C. Binkley and Donald B. Vought argue that new technology, and the managerial system of leadership, has created a new kind of military institution that can fight *only* a highly sophisticated war in Europe, the least likely of all wars. The Army, in particular, and the other services, in general, cannot attract the vast numbers of highly skilled technical soldiers necessary to conduct this kind of war. By 1985, the Army alone will require more than 15,000 computer operators for battlefield systems at the corps level and below. This figure does not include vast numbers of other highly skilled personnel to operate the weapons, electronic counter-measure systems, etc. This kind of military machine has strong public and military support, but without radical changes in recruiting trends, the Army will never be able to recruit the quality of people required to man these systems, and thus may not be capable of winning the least likely war. This essay paints a picture of a new professional military establishment as it has developed in recent years. Driven by advancing technology and modern management structures, it may ultimately become less useful as an instrument of American foreign policy or as a force capable of meeting US security needs.

# **1.**

## **MORAL AND ETHICAL FOUNDATIONS OF MILITARY PROFESSIONALISM**

**Sam C. Sarkesian**

If one accepts the premise that war and politics have their own morality, politicians and military men share a common dilemma of reconciling individual moral and ethical principles to the larger objectives of war and politics. But, if war and politics are *simply a reflection* of individual morality and ethics, then one is placed in a moral and ethical box from which he can extricate himself only by jeopardizing his sense of autonomy and self-esteem. Nowhere is this dilemma more apparent than in the military profession. Politicians in general seem to recognize the difficulty of equating politics with the individual "writ large." Military men, however, tend to presume that personal and professional morality and ethics must coincide, even though military men and politicians rarely face circumstances that require clear-cut distinctions between evil and good alternatives. This "either/or" absolutism makes it difficult for military professionals to take imperfect positions for fear that anything less than absolutism will expose them to charges of advocating less than the highest moral and ethical standards. As a result, they adopt a unique posture.

The fact is that it is necessary and moral to do things in politics that would be unjustifiable in the circumstances of private life. The political order has exigencies and complexities that have no part in private life. Thus, moral behavior there will be correspondingly more difficult to judge. . . . The problem is that

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because it is more difficult, the moral dimension tends to be dropped. As a result, politics often gets done without conscience. Outside of last-resort matters, then, it appears that one enters a moral free zone where conscience can be dropped before entering.<sup>1</sup>

For a profession striving for philosophical guidelines in absolute terms, the impossibility of the goal makes it expeditious to acknowledge a moral free zone as a rationalization for reconciling the gap between military behavior, morals, ethics, and military purpose. Furthermore, such a perspective alleviates the need for serious philosophical reflection. The fact remains that professional stress on integrity, obedience, and loyalty builds antagonism into the individual/professional relationship. Individual integrity may require a sense of self-esteem, honesty, and honor, but professional demands often require subordination of individual values to maintain the honor and integrity of the profession. This problem has been a continuing source of tension, and, in the aftermath of Vietnam, it has become more pronounced.

The volunteer military era in the United States has added a sense of urgency to the examination of professional morals and ethics. Man-power issues—particularly those issues concerned with the quality of personnel, their attitudes and values, and the military socialization process—affect the moral and ethical patterns of the profession and the institution. The relatively rapid turnover of the first-term enlisted ranks will continually bring into the military large groups of young men and women with diverse ideas of morality and ethics and with backgrounds linked closely with the political and social structure of the civilian system. In the light of civil-military interpenetration and the inability of the military to isolate itself from the influences of civilian society, it is unlikely that the military socialization process can prevent a continuing civilian impact on these young men and women. The infusion of large groups of people with moral and ethical backgrounds that may differ considerably from military concepts of ethics and morality can erode professional effectiveness and cohesiveness. For these reasons, the profession must set clear moral and ethical patterns linked with the best patterns in society.

The purpose of this study is to inquire into the moral and ethical foundations of military professionalism—to reexamine intellectual and professional perspectives, describe the dilemmas posed by

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these perspectives, and present an alternate moral and ethical posture. The paper is not intended as a historical or philosophical discourse on morality and/or ethics. The classical thinkers, as well as contemporary writers, have developed a great deal of literature on these matters. However, no serious examination of morality and ethics is completely satisfactory without some reference to these sources and their historical continuities. Although this discussion touches on these matters, it focuses primarily on the individual professional and his profession in the modern context. The study does not seriously examine the specifics of internal professional considerations, i.e., leadership, quality of the enlisted structure, or job performance. These matters have been examined extensively elsewhere to the neglect of studies on the broader and more fundamental issues of professionalism, morality, and ethics.

The writer makes no attempt to provide definitive answers and does not deal with metaphysical speculations or philosophical abstractions. The study is based on the presumption that the process of examining morality and ethics as they pertain to the military profession will broaden understanding and allow professionals to come to grips with dilemmas within the profession and between the military and society. The writer also believes that serious reflection on morality and ethics will nurture individual and professional integrity.

### **An Overview of Moral and Ethical Principles**

Moral values derive from "culturally based propositions or generalizations about what befits or does not befit the behavior of human beings." The importance of moral values cannot be overstated since it is an inherent part of human nature. ". . . Moral values make us what we are as persons. . . . Failure here is drastic, not just unfortunate."<sup>2</sup> It follows that moral principles evolve from the larger sense of "humanity"; that is they stem from a universe beyond the immediate world of the individual.

Ethics is, in part, the behavior expected of individuals to conform to these culturally based guidelines. Ethics also presumes that individuals actively seek enlightenment about their moral values and critically examine their behavior in that light.

A coherent environment requires some order and priority in the moral and ethical universe. The continued functioning of the political

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system requires such an environment. Order and priority are also necessary for the individual to develop reference points in an evolving sense of personal integrity. A major function of the political system is to integrate moral and ethical standards, establish priorities, and create an orderly environment in which these reference points can operate. First-order values are those values directly associated with life itself—survival and sanctity of life. Philosophers may identify a number of moral values and ethical concerns, since the purpose of the military—its very existence—is based on giving and taking of life.

Other values of a lesser order stem from these first-order values. That is, they may be peculiar and unique to a particular type of ideology and culture.

We shall talk about ethics or morality, not as ideas necessarily sacred or "right" in themselves, but merely as widely held values which, rightly or wrongly, receive widespread sanction and approval. We will hold as ultimate values those goals and criteria which seem to us to be most closely in accord with what is real. These ultimate values, which are held by every great religion and which have been advanced by each of the great prophets and religious leaders throughout recorded history, are: love of fellow man, justice in all acts among men, and the self-fulfillment of the individual through understanding and through actions that bring him closer to living in accord with reality.<sup>3</sup>

In this respect, freedom of speech, individual autonomy, justice, and brotherhood may be values ingrained in Western liberal democracies, but social justice and the importance of the group and state may be predominant values in non-Western systems. (Interestingly enough, national sovereignties fragment the universal concept of morality and ethics.) Every political system pursues the values of survival, sanctity of life, and related values in accordance with its ideological guidelines. Thus ideology determines morality and ethical codes. Frankena notes that, in a democratic system,

Society must be careful . . . For it is itself morally required to respect the individual's autonomy and liberty, and in general to treat him justly; and it must remember that morality is made to minister to the good lives of individuals and not to interfere with them any more than is necessary. Morality is made for man, not man for morality.<sup>4</sup>

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### **Professional Perspectives**

For the military professional, the political-social system in the United States imposes moral and ethical dimensions that are further complicated by the ethos and lifestyle of his profession. It is the profession that has the most immediate impact on the member's everyday life and lifestyle. And professional interpretation of these moral and ethical patterns has the greatest impact on the individual's own sense of morality and ethics.

Moral and ethical patterns in the American military profession are manifested in the concepts of personal integrity, duty, honor, country, and officership. Although precise definitions of these concepts are difficult, there are common elements to any definition.

Integrity, as defined by Webster, is "the quality or state of being of sound moral principle; uprightness, honest and sincere." In broader terms, it means that the individual is an entity in himself—a "whole man" who derives his moral values and ethical behavior from the larger universe. It also suggests a sensitivity to other human beings and the individual's awareness of the consequences of his actions on other men and on the environment. Finally, it is rooted in the idea that man is a rational being whose values stem psychically from his uniqueness.

One military scholar writes as follows:

We forget all too easily the wisdom concerning these matters given to us by almost every moral philosopher dating back at least as far as Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. The classical Greek conception of the just or honorable man encompassed all of one's human acts. Moral prescriptions are given in broad terms, e.g., "seek the golden mean of moderation between the extremes of too much and too little," or "act in accordance with right reason." Aristotle would advise us not to seek more precision than our subject matter permits; moral philosophy cannot provide the specific conclusions of a mathematical system. We can identify general classes of good and bad human actions, e.g., promise-keeping, truth-telling, lying, cheating, stealing, and so on; but the crucial step to right behavior is not following a rule because it is a rule. Rather one becomes a good man through developing traits of character, by constantly and consistently performing good actions. The critical thing is what kind of person one becomes in the long run, throughout a lifetime.<sup>3</sup>

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At various times, duty has been defined as skilled performance, mission orientation, commitment above personal interests, and self-sacrifice. In the broader sense, it refers to the individual's goal in life in the context of his function in the political system. For the military professional, it presumes a commitment to carry out the dictates of his position and office. In brief, military professionals are obligated to achieve their mission regardless of personal sacrifices. Ultimate liability becomes the operational concept.

Honor can be defined in terms of loyalty to the brotherhood of officers, gentlemanly conduct, and personal sacrifice. In simpler terms, it means acting in a fashion to maintain the dignity of office—its repute, esteem, and respect. But, above all, honor is presumably based on moral values and ethical behavior rooted in universally accepted values.

Adherence to concepts of integrity, duty, and honor insures performance of the essential professional function—service to the country. What the nation demands of the military through its appointed and elected leadership becomes the operating principle for the profession. The nation's decision becomes the unquestioned mission for the military. The country (state) is the sole client; thus, professional honor and duty are meaningful only in the context of service to the state.

The idea of "officership" is not generally addressed in the literature, but it is an important quality because it distinguishes officers from members of other ranks. Officership is based on the idea of "special trust and confidence" spelled out in the oath of office.<sup>6</sup> Officers are appointed by the President, and they are agents of the executive branch. As such, officers hold a special trust and confidence to perform their duties with a dignity that brings honor to the state. The President "commissions" officers to take on certain powers in the name of the executive and, with this commission, authorizes them to act in the name of the state. This "commission" goes beyond the credentials of the officer at the time of commissioning; it implies that the officer will maintain and develop his intellectual acuities and performance skills to insure that he can carry out the tasks at any given time or in any given environment.

All of these concepts may appear self-evident, but they are not. The greatest difficulty is their translation from abstractions to the practicalities and realities of military life. In seeking a solution to this

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difficulty, the military profession has adopted a parochial perspective that interprets morality and ethics within the boundaries of the profession rather than from the larger universe. Absolutism in moral and ethical standards qualified by the immediate necessities of military purpose apparently circumvents inherent difficulties in reconciling individuality, the profession, and society. If the military serves society, then its primary value system must evolve from the political-social system that it serves. One cannot have it both ways: either the military serves society or it serves itself. It is philosophically self-serving to presume that the military serves society but develops moral and ethical patterns exclusively within the military world. This difficulty in relating military values to the values of society is one factor in the persistent dilemma of attempting to reconcile the military profession with democracy. The dilemma has led to a variety of attempts to clarify and explain the military profession in terms of its "separateness" from society.

### **The Profession as a Moral and Ethical Community**

In the pre-World War II period, the military was a "closed" society that permitted only limited civilian penetration. Professionals could reasonably argue that the military was similar to a church or priesthood with a morality and ethics of its own. This perspective was an element of the politics and social environment of the times and the relatively insignificant role played in the political-social order by the military profession. World War II changed that perspective. The military is now an important political institution with a high degree of civilian-military interface and civilian value penetration. This civilian penetration hinders the military's ability to control the philosophical dimensions of the profession and the "private" side of professional family life.

In the years after World War II, significant research concluded that the military profession had shifted to a managerial posture. The new demands of the nuclear age and the apparent success of corporations or the entrepreneurial approach to efficiency took root in the systems analysis perspective and spread throughout the military system. Consequently, a body of opinion equated military values and lifestyles to the values and lifestyles of the entrepreneurial world in civilian society.

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Today one can observe both perspectives: priesthood and entrepreneurship within the military community and in the scholarly literature.<sup>7</sup> Both perspectives provide half-truths. Some segments of the military can be compared to the managerial and entrepreneurial "mind-set," but to presume that this development is the sole thrust of professionalism is to overlook the fact that men must still be led in operational units. Command decisions are not based solely or even generally on systems analysis or cost effectiveness. An entrepreneurial "mind-set" cannot be instilled and maintained in a professional system whose client is the state and whose performance criteria has little to do with production and profit.

It is also unrealistic to presume that the profession is a priesthood with a monastic underpinning and commitment to a particular "high calling." As research and a number of attitude surveys have shown, individuals become military professionals for a number of interrelated reasons ranging from the challenges of their jobs to patriotism. Furthermore, these individuals are usually family men with the same basic drives and desires as most civilian professionals: security, a good education for their children, and social and economic comfort.

One author explains that

... ideologies and ethics of the profession which motivated the officer in his youth, like the ideals of the young liberal college student, become qualified by the hard realities of family responsibility, job status, and retirement security. The middle-aged career officer has about the same self-interests as any other professional, despite the creeds of service and sacrifice.<sup>8</sup>

Attempts to classify the profession into either entrepreneurial or monastic structures inevitably leads to simple convergence or divergence. These oversimplifications become particularly glaring in examining the differences between profession and bureaucracy. Palumbo and Styskal observe that

Professionalism is a difficult concept to define; it can easily be confused with bureaucracy. Although there are many similarities between the two terms, there is a major distinction; professional control is primarily "horizontal" in that professionals organize themselves into voluntary associations for the purpose of self-control. Bureaucratic control is "vertical" in that it

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is achieved through the authority structure in an organization. For professionals, control is achieved through the sanctions of fellow professionals, and code of ethics; for bureaucrats, control derives from position.<sup>9</sup>

Without formally structured voluntary associations, the military strives for professional control through a moral and ethical code based on integrity, duty, honor, country, and officership. These concepts are horizontally articulated through personal, collegial, and "brotherhood" linkages between professionals. These linkages are inchoate, at best, with psychological rather than associational (formal) or structural implications. Vertical control is exercised through the military bureaucracy, which places professionals in authority over other professionals through the rank structure. This bureaucratic or vertical structure also serves as a professional control structure subsuming and integrating the horizontal control mechanisms. The result is a blurring of lines between professional and bureaucratic control. And this blurring precipitates oversimplifications leading to apparently dichotomous distinctions—monastic or entrepreneurial and divergence or convergence. The real issues are not the issues suggested by these oversimplifications but, rather, the intensity and extensiveness of the civil-military interface and the moral and ethical codes that society provides for the profession. The important issues are the means by which these boundaries and reference points are integrated into the military socialization process and the manner in which the profession responds to them. Civilian values and ethical patterns govern in certain areas, and, in others, values evolve primarily as a result of the military structure. Changing values in the political-social system and evolving security environments in the international arena force changes in the relationships and "mixes" between military and civilian moral and ethical patterns. In any case, the military cannot subordinate the first-order values of society nor their ethical manifestations without risking a loss of legitimacy and professional esteem.

Thus, the moral and ethical patterns of the military profession must be linked with society on the one hand and stem from the unique purpose of the profession on the other. As difficult as it may be, this effort requires the linking of a subsystem based on homogeneous values, a predictable environment, and a controlled socialization process with the larger political-social system, which

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pursues a heterogeneous and pluralistic value system and depends on a variety of sources for socialization.<sup>10</sup>

## **Personal Integrity and Professionalism**

The horizontal and vertical intermeshing of a bureaucratic structure with a professional network poses an inherent dilemma for the individual professional. And the stresses of entrepreneurial forces and monastic isolation aggravate the dilemma. On the one hand, the profession operates through a bureaucratic structure while it proclaims the virtues of professionalism. On the other hand, it has adopted a number of modern entrepreneurial practices while it retains a tendency towards a monastic lifestyle. The individual professional is unable to link his moral and ethical principles solely to one or the other dimension. The nature of the American system, the pervasiveness of the mass media, and alternate sources of socialization and satisfaction (i.e., the church and civilian education and social institutions) make the professional man susceptible to influences outside the profession, albeit in a less pervasive way.<sup>11</sup> The individual is buffeted by these forces, but the profession expects him to follow a lifestyle and accept morality and ethics that evolve primarily from a monastic focus and horizontal network. Although the professional operates within the context of the morality and values of the political-social system, the individual resolves these dilemmas by adjusting his lifestyle to the expectations of the profession. Thus, the perspectives of the profession become the dominating morality and ethics for the individual officer. The individual substitutes institutional articulation of integrity, duty, honor, country, and officership for his own sense of morality and ethics.

From the institutional standpoint, the professional man's first-order values are loyalty to the institution and profession. As Ellis and Moore point out, "... the military atmosphere of the West Point culture puts a special premium on obedience to imposed standards of conduct at the cost of internalized ideals." This is a characteristic of the entire profession. Ellis and Moore conclude with this observation:

Perhaps more than any other group, the military is victimized by a divided allegiance; on the one hand, they are charged with carrying out dictates of the elected or appointed civilian leaders; on the other hand, as the Americans most intimately acquainted with the implementation of our military policies, they are most

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likely to have personal qualms about the effectiveness of these policies. When caught in this moral dilemma, most West Pointers are conditioned to perceive their obedience to lawful superiors as the highest form of duty. Such a perception is regarded as the essence of military professionalism, for it involves putting personal considerations beneath service, duty above self. When there is a conflict between what a West Pointer calls duty and honor, then, he is likely to have no ethical answers. Or rather, he is trained to answer by equating honor with duty.<sup>12</sup>

In reaching essentially the same conclusion, Dixon writes that military men have a basically conservative syndrome.

It reflects . . . "a generalized susceptibility to experiencing threat or anxiety in the face of uncertainty." It works by "simplifying, ordering, controlling, and rendering more secure, both the external world (through perceptual processes . . .) and the internal world (needs, feelings, desires, etc.). Order is imposed upon inner needs and feelings by subjugating them to rigid and implistic external codes of conduct (rules, laws, morals, duties, obligations, etc.), thus reducing conflict and averting the anxiety that would accompany awareness of the freedom to choose among alternative modes of action."<sup>13</sup>

The demand for institutional obedience and professional loyalty can lead to professional mediocrity and institutional sterility and constrain critical and responsible inquiry. Translated to the lowest ranks, it overwhelms younger officers, fosters uncritical acceptance of anything from above, and reinforces conformity and institutional righteousness. In every war and in every age, however, soldiers have found in their ranks incompetents who hold positions of responsibility and whose decisions could result in momentous military disasters.

Liddle Hart makes this point:

As a young officer I had cherished a deep respect for the Higher Command, but I was sadly disillusioned about many of them when I came to see them more closely from the angle of a military correspondent. It was saddening to discover how many apparently honorable men would stoop to almost anything to help advance their careers.<sup>14</sup>

Flammer writes: "Armies tend to regard as inherently 'dishonorable' or 'disloyal' any suggestions that important errors were

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made or that leadership, at least at the top levels, was ever less than sterling."<sup>15</sup> Individuals may express dissent, but they must express it through channels and within the narrow confines of professional loyalty.

One of the most important tests of professional cohesiveness is the ability to sustain and withstand criticism, both from within and without. The crucial test is not how the profession responds when things are going well but how it responds when it faces severe circumstances. An untested profession cannot claim competence or true professional status. As one scholar notes, "Our judgment or principle is really justified if it holds up under sustained scrutiny . . . from the moral point of view on the part of everyone."<sup>16</sup>

## **Professionalism and the Humanistic Factor**

Much of the literature on military professionalism deals with skills, technical competence, corporateness, and values intrinsically military in their perspective. These considerations are certainly valid, but a major omission is the responsibility of the professional to the larger political-social system in terms of moral and ethical considerations. This idea relates closely to the concept of profession in the context of wider concern for human behavior and political-social systems.

A professional is charged not only with developing skills and competence in his field but also with expressing concern for the well-being of the client (the state). That is, the professional must develop knowledge and awareness of the broader issues of political-social systems and human behavior. All professions strive to develop humanistic perspectives with horizons that extend beyond competent performance. The military profession has responded least to this consideration and has thus exposed itself to charges of "semi-professionalism." The nature of the learning process and the intellectual dimension is the distinguishing features between an occupation and a profession. For example, nothing prevents a carpenter from reading Plato. But it is unlikely that the carpenter's clients will expect him to expound humanistic insights or debate the issues in *The Republic* in order to perform well as a carpenter. However, military professionals concerned for their client (the state) and deeply involved in issues of peace and war can be reasonably expected to develop horizons beyond skills of leading battalions to the attack. Reading Plato and

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examining the problems of rule and the ruled may be a reasonable professional requirement, and understanding the significance of Socrates and the "cup of hemlock" may provide insights into modern moral and ethical dilemmas. Most important, serious thought on such matters is an integral part of the "whole" man concept.

The conduct of war may be the single most compelling professional purpose. The demands of a no-war, no-peace environment; issues associated with the aftermath of war; and a variety of conflicts require a professional dimension not bound by competency on conventional and nuclear battlefields. Without sensitivity to the human factor and intellectual insights into political-social matters, the military may well be a "semi-profession."

As suggested earlier, the characteristics of the profession (institutional obedience and professional loyalty) give short shrift to the humanistic factor and subordinate the moral and ethical issues to professional demands for competent performance. The "moral free" expediency is an attractive posture since it apparently does not provide a rational solution to moral and ethical dilemmas. And also as noted earlier, this approach leads to a simplified decisionmaking process remarkably similar to the process described by Simon.

Administrative man recognizes that the world he perceives is a drastically simplified model of the budding, blooming confusion that constitutes the real world. He is content with this gross simplification because he believes that the real world is mostly empty—that most of the facts of the real world have no great relevance to any particular situation he is facing, and that most significant chains of causes and consequences are short and simple. Hence, he is content to leave out of account those aspects of reality—and that means most aspects—that are substantially irrelevant at a given time. He makes his choices using a simple picture of the situation that takes into account just a few of the factors that he regards as most relevant and crucial.

What is the significance of these two characteristics of administrative man? First, because he satisfies, rather than maximizes, administrative man can make his choices without first examining all possible behavior alternatives and without ascertaining that these are in fact all alternatives. Second, because he treats the world as rather "empty," and ignores the "interrelatedness of all things" (so stupefying to thought and action), administrative man is able to make his decisions with relatively

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simple rules of thumb that do not make impossible demands upon his capacity for thought.<sup>17</sup>

By adopting this concept, the military profession can easily accept duty, honor, country, as simplistic guides to rational action. And this approach does not challenge personal integrity. But it does accommodate itself easily to the concept of officership, since orders from above become the basis for legitimate and uncritical action.

## **The Future**

In examining these moral and ethical dilemmas, one should not conclude that all officers constantly engage in professional philosophizing about them. Indeed, if this were the case, the profession would collapse by the sheer weight of philosophical inquiry. Professional morals and ethics generally coincide with the professional's lifestyle and philosophical orientation. The military profession tends to attract individuals with compatible moral and ethical patterns. Occasionally serious antagonisms emerge between the profession and society and between the individual and the profession. The depth and seriousness of the antagonisms are the important concerns, not their frequency.

Without some resolution or accommodation, antagonisms can erode professional prestige and develop serious civil-military tensions, and the profession suffers over the long term. Equally important, the profession needs to attract competent, intelligent young men and women. It also needs to provide an environment that encourages a willing and enthusiastic individual commitment and stimulates physical and intellectual growth. Serious differences between personal integrity and professional demands or between the profession and society hinders professional vigor and deters highly qualified individuals from entering the profession.

The dilemmas and antagonisms between the moral and ethical patterns of society and the military make for an uneasy accommodation. Of course, accommodation becomes less difficult during times of clearly perceived crises when the military is expected to play a dominant role. At other times, however, the differences between society and the military can become aggravated, and the profession then carries the major burden of self-analysis and justification.

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Some quarters commonly view the dilemmas and antagonisms as historical continuities of a transitory and cyclic nature. It is a mistake, however, to assume that the present character of society, its technological advances, the ever-changing security environment, and the propensity for international conflicts ranging from nuclear exchange to revolutionary wars can be rationalized away as historical patterns. The changed character of the present era is reinforced by America's commitment to egalitarian principles, and these principles have had their impact on the character of the military profession as never before perhaps in history. And, as suggested earlier, neither the monastic/entrepreneurial nor convergence/divergence models can provide a realistic view in such an environment.

If personal integrity develops from a variety of sources, not only from the military, then there is an inherent tension underlying the concept of personal integrity, duty, honor, country and officership. Thus, at times, the personal integrity of the military professional will confront the contrary demands of the profession, the institution, and the search for career success.

Dilemmas between personal integrity and professional and institutional demands are generally rationalized away by reference to the deeply ingrained concept of obedience and professional loyalty. But, here, one should turn to history for some reference points. The study of history and political philosophy shows that the dilemma between individuals and institutions has always been a characteristic of Western civilization. For example, in *Antigone*, Sophocles depicts the dilemma between the heroine and King Creon. Antigone accepted death rather than conform to the king's laws, which, she believed, violated the higher laws of the gods. In Plato's *Republic*, Socrates accepted death for breaking what he considered unjust laws. In *A Man For All Seasons*, Thomas More not only placed the law of God above the laws of Henry VIII, but he would not reverse his decision even though it meant death. Throughout history, men and women committed to principles of right and wrong have been willing to accept death rather than unjust institutional demands or laws.

Study and reflection show that moral and ethical dilemmas are commonly resolved within the intellect and conscience of the individual. To be sure, such a suggestion has religious and metaphysical overtones. It may seem expeditious to state simply that choices depend on the individual, but, in this instance, this is indeed

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the starting point. In the final analysis, the individual chooses his profession and develops his own sense of morality and ethics. His own personal integrity is the measure of the morality and ethics of the profession and society he serves. The profession expects him to be an educated, rational being who does not make his professional commitment haphazardly. The real question is what kind of moral and ethical pattern best befits the military profession—one that can integrate the concepts of integrity, duty, honor, country, and officership?

In *Pyramids of Sacrifice: Political Ethics and Social Change*, Peter Berger addresses such issues and provides insights particularly relevant to the military professional. Using Max Weber's assessment, Berger identifies the ethics of attitude and the ethics of responsibility. The first is *Gesinnungsethik*, which can be translated into ethics of absolute ends. This concept

... insists that nothing is ethically valid except adherence to absolute values that permit no modification by empirical circumstances. In this type of ethics the moral attitude of the actor is all that matters: If he is morally pure, the consequences of his actions are strictly irrelevant.<sup>18</sup>

On the other hand, *Verantwortungsethik*, translated into ethics of responsibility, presumes that the "political actor does not seek some inner purity in adherence to absolute norms, but, often with anguished anxiety, tries to act in such a way as to effect the most humane consequences possible."

This observation leads to a number of conclusions regarding the needs of the military profession. The profession can no longer justify its actions by purity of motive; that is, it cannot simply rationalize its posture with the presumption that ethics of absolute ends (the moral attitude of the actor) is all that matters. This argument states that consequences are not important if the professional officer is morally pure. Such an attitude relieves the individual officer from responsibility for his actions. This is a common attitude in times of war or in performance of particularly serious and onerous duties. The acceptance of a moral free zone allows the officer to perform with moral purity in the professional context because he can rationalize his performance from the concepts of duty, honor, and country, with little philosophical reflection. The most damning result is that, at a time

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when professionals should be fulfilling the purpose of their profession—performance of their ultimate liability—they tend to negate any moral and ethical standards.

A moral and ethical posture that reduces the boundaries between ideals and realities can address these issues candidly. If one accepts the fact that human beings are imperfect, that the profession is imperfect, and that he lives in an imperfect world, then the most realistic approach is based on the "ethics of intent" and on moral values that view sanctity of life in a democratic context. Ethics of intent combines the ethics of absolute ends with responsibility for the consequences of action. The professional officer, like the political actor described by Peter Berger, does not exclusively "seek some inner purity in adherence to the absolute norms, but often with anguished anxiety, tries to act in such a way as to effect the most humane consequences possible."

This compromise is not an easy position either for the profession or for the individual officer. It absolves neither the profession nor the individual from responsibility, motive, or the consequences of actions. Equally important, such an approach focuses moral and ethical patterns more sharply at all levels of the profession. If the intent is to deceive, then regardless of any "professional" manner of carrying out orders or accomplishing the mission, the officer is guilty of violating the basis of professional morality and, indeed, personal integrity. If the officer's intent is simply to advance his career, then he is violating professional morals and his own integrity regardless of his professionalism in performing his duties and accomplishing the mission.

Ethics of intent requires the profession not only to link its values with the values of the political-social system but to establish the environment that instills such values in the professional milieu. Therefore, the study of moral and ethical issues must become a part of the professional socialization process. As mentioned earlier, the concepts of integrity, duty, honor, country, and officership are basic moral and ethical elements of military professionalism. These concepts are not autonomous to the military profession. Each concept is influenced by, and related to, civilian socialization processes and the linkages between the military and society. Civilian values and moral and ethical patterns influence the interpretations and meaning of these concepts. The military, by itself, cannot define these terms as it sees fit without reference to the very political-social system it serves.

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Some people may eschew the need for integrating political and national values into the military value system, but professionalism cannot stand on values and ethics that evolve solely from technical competence and obedience. If the American people have learned nothing more from the Vietnam experience and, indeed, from experiences in other wars, they have learned that military cohesion and effectiveness depend largely on the harmony of individual moral and ethical values, the values of the military profession, and the values of society.

The moral and ethical patterns of the military profession clearly cannot be changed or revised overnight. Morality and ethics are based on the total socialization process—a process that is deeply ingrained in the system and in society. A long-range goal for qualitative refinement of moral and ethical patterns requires teaching, study, and example. These are not new techniques: the Christian religion and Confucianism depend on these procedures to propagate the faith and establish harmonious relationships.

There is a need for serious study of the dilemmas that face a military institution in a democratic society. Equally important, there is a need to examine the theological and philosophical concepts of morality and ethics in the context of the ultimate purpose of the military profession. These concepts must also be examined as they affect the personal integrity and lifestyle of the individual officer. But study is not the only approach. One must also be taught the implications of moral and ethical patterns, and learned men in and out of the military can address these issues. Service schools need to devote some time in their curricula to the study and teaching of moral and ethical patterns; learning about morals and ethics should be an integral part of the total professional learning experience.

Finally, a proper moral and ethical environment must be established and maintained by the highest ranking military men, particularly men in important positions, as reference models for younger professionals or professionals-to-be, e.g., ROTC cadets. One publication noted: "Close examination of our data reveals a tendency in every age group, company milieu, and management level for a man to accept the values of his superiors."<sup>19</sup> This trend places a heavy burden on senior military professionals. They must make and evaluate decisions affecting their own lives and the lives of others according to moral values and ethical criteria rooted in the larger universe of

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humanity. Most important, the personal integrity of senior officers must foster a high level of integrity in other professionals. Although it may be difficult, an officer may need to take a stand on personal integrity even if it means standing against the institution. One top management official offers these comments on ethical principles and codes of behavior:

The pattern and level of corporate ethical standards are determined predominantly by the code of behavior formulated and promulgated by the top management. The rest of the organization, almost perforce, will follow these ethical operating precepts and examples; but in the absence of such norms, the same organization will be motivated by individual, and possibly inconsistent, codes of behavior.

The crucial matter, therefore, is whether or not each individual comprising top management has a *well-defined*, high-standard personal code of behavior. If each has this clear, objective, consistent concept of ethics—however acquired—he has the yardsticks, the guiding principles, against which to measure the ethical import of his decisions.

The executive whose concepts of ethics are vague, and whose principles of ethics are ill-defined—and possibly even vacillating and inconsistent—is in constant danger of yielding to expediency and even pursuing unethical practices; or, worse, providing an undesirable environment wherein his subordinates can make decisions based solely on their own personal ethical principles, with no frame of ethical reference from the top.

*Of course, a well-defined personal code, however high in standards, does not of itself ensure ethical conduct; courage is always necessary in order to assert what one knows to be right.<sup>20</sup>*

In the final analysis, though, no code of behavior, efficiency report, or professional socialization process will provide the answer for the individual officer faced with a dilemma of responding to what he feels is clearly a foolish order or a foolhardy mission, an incompetent superior, or an unethical officer friend. The most expeditious and least disturbing course of action is to follow orders from above, obey superiors uncritically, and overlook unethical behavior in one's colleagues. The final decision rests with the individual professional, and such a decision will be made by the total man—his moral and

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ethical principles, his conscience, and his sense of personal integrity that evolve from the total socialization process.

Finally, the relationship between the profession and society must be so construed that society is accepted as a political-social base for professional reinforcement and not viewed as an obstacle to professional purpose. Otherwise, the profession substitutes its moral and ethical values for the values of society and makes the military institution a self-perpetuating legitimizer of its own actions. Although such a condition may be acceptable in many political-social systems, it is contrary to liberal democratic principles.

In this respect, both military professionals and society must accept and understand that, in their ideal sense, liberal democratic principles and military values rarely coincide. Indeed many civilians incorrectly perceive that military professionals exist outside the mainstream of democratic "life" and values. The profession must understand this condition if it expects to deal with the dilemmas posed by an institution that pursues values contrary to the values associated with individual autonomy and civilian concepts of democracy.

This study has emphasized no one set of moral and ethical answers, but it does not accept the view that situational ethics are acceptable. Such a posture can easily rationalize any action on moral and ethical grounds because of the immediate situation. This simply appears to be another way of accepting "moral free" activity. One should also recognize the difficulty in what is being suggested in ethics of intent. Military professional values and the values of society will rarely coincide, and they should not be expected to coincide. But there must be a reasonable, if not enthusiastic, linkage between universal values, the values of the political system and military values of personal integrity, duty, honor, country, and officership. The inherent antipathy between several of these values and their varying interpretations makes this a difficult, but not impossible task. The following comments by Daniel Maguire suggest the most appropriate conclusion:

If it is true that wonder is the beginning and source of philosophy, then only those who are utterly blasé, bored, and superficial are closed to the tasks of philosophy. In this sense, then, everyone with a mind is summoned to philosophize. Philosophy is based on a recognition that human life and its setting are mysterious. True philosophy is too modest to hope to dissipate the mystery; it only hopes to encounter it fruitfully.<sup>21</sup>

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### **ENDNOTES TO MORAL AND ETHICAL FOUNDATIONS OF MILITARY PROFESSIONALISM**

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2. *Ibid.*, pp. 20, 94.
3. Edmund P. Learned, Arch R. Dooley, and Robert L. Katz, "Personal Values and Business Decisions" in *Ethics for Executive Series*, Reprints from *Harvard Business Review*. This article appeared in the *Harvard Business Review*, March-April 1959, p. 84.
4. William K. Frankena, *Ethics* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1963), p. 98.
5. Malham M. Wakin, "Ethics of Leadership," ed. Sam C. Sarkesian and Thomas M. Gannon, Military Ethics and Professionalism, *American Behavioral Scientists*, Vol. 19, Number 5, May/June 1976, p. 573.
6. For a useful discussion, see John R. Stephenson, "Special Trust and Confidence, Whatever that Means," Research Study, Air University, Maxwell AFB, AL, May 1977, unpublished monograph.
7. See, for example, Morris Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier* (New York: The Free Press, 1971), pp. 418-435; Morris Janowitz and Roger Little, *Sociology and the Military Establishment* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1965) revised edition, chapter 1; Richard Gabriel, "Acquiring New Values in Military Bureaucracies: A Preliminary Model," in *Journal of Political & Military Sociology*, Vol. 7, No. 1, Spring 1979, pp. 89-102; Franklin D. Margiotta, ed., *The Changing World of the American Military* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1979). Throughout Margiotta's book, various authors refer to the changing nature of professionalism and bureaucratic adaptations.
8. James C. Donovan, *Militarism, USA* (New York: Scribners, 1970), pp. 64-81.
9. Dennis J. Palumbo and Richard A. Styskal, "Professionalism and Receptivity to Change," *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. XVIII, No. 2, May 1974, pp. 387-388.
10. For a more detailed discussion based on empirical evidence, see Sam C. Sarkesian, "Empirical Reassessment of Military Professionalism," in Margiotta, *The Changing World of the American Military*, pp. 37-56; Bruce D. Russett and Elizabeth C. Hanson, *Interest and Ideology: The Foreign Policy Beliefs of American Businessmen* (San Francisco: W. H. Freeman and Co., 1975); Bruce

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M. Russett, "Political Perspectives of U.S. Military and Business Elites," *Armed Forces and Society*, Vol. 1, No. 1, November 1974, pp. 79-101.

11. Civilian education is an alternate source of socialization, but there is little agreement regarding its impact on values. At the minimum, it does not expose professionals to a new range of values and a broadened concept of critical inquiry. On the other hand, professional military education tends to reinforce the traditional military perspective; institutional loyalty, subordination of the individual to the institution; and giving primacy to concepts of "Duty, Honor, Country." For a more detailed examination of civilian education and professional military education, see Sam C. Sarkesian, *The Professional Army Officer in a Changing Society* (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1975), chapters 9 and 10.
12. Joseph Ellis and Robert Moore, *School for Soldiers: West Point and the Profession of Arms* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), p. 180, and pp. 176-177.
13. Glenn Wilson, ed., *The Psychology of Conservatives* (London Academic Press, 1973), as quoted in Norman Dixon, *On the Psychology of Military Incompetence* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1976), p. 402.
14. L. D. H. Hart, *Thoughts of War* (London: Faber and Faber), pp. 25-29, as quoted in Flammer, p. 593; see also Dixon.
15. Philip M. Flammer, "Conflicting Loyalties and the American Military Ethic," Sarkesian and Gannon, p. 595.
16. Frankena, p. 95.
17. Herbert A. Simon, *Administrative Behavior* (New York: The Free Press, 1957), Second Edition, pp. xxv-xxvi.
18. Peter L. Berger, *Pyramids of Sacrifice: Political Ethics and Social Change* (New York: Anchor Books, 1976), p. 249.
19. "How Ethical Are Businessmen?" *Harvard Business Review*, p. 41. This article reprinted from *Harvard Business Review*, July-August 1971.
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## 2.

# ETHICS IN THE MILITARY PROFESSION: THE CONTINUING TENSION

**Thomas E. Kelly III**

The perceived failure of the military in Vietnam and the failures of elected officials in the political arena generated a heightened awareness of military professional standards and ethical canons in the mid-1970s. However, the legal, medical, and business professions experienced a similar awareness. These professions seem to suffer mainly in the service they render, that is, in their relationships outside the profession, but the Army seems to suffer internally as a result of ethical problems. The misuse of statistics or even subordinates for career enhancement are examples of internal malaise.

In *The Face of the Third Reich*, Joachim Fest notes that Hitler elicited no rumblings when he removed Von Blomberg and General Fritsch. The Fuehrer then "knew all generals were cowards. His contempt was reinforced by the unhesitating readiness of numerous generals to move into the positions which had become free. . ." And, in *The Best and the Brightest*, David Halberstam makes a similar point in discussing the failure to call up the Reserves during the Vietnam buildup. Military planning was keyed to the mobilization, and, according to Halberstam, President Lyndon Johnson led the Defense Department to believe that the Reserves would be called up. At decision time, however, he decided against the callup. Later, in July 1965,

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## Tension

President Johnson asked General Earl Wheeler, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, whether he agreed with the decision not to mobilize the Reserves. Wheeler nodded his assent.

It was, said a witness, an extraordinary moment, like watching a lion tamer dealing with some of the great lions. Everyone in the room knew Wheeler objected . . . but Wheeler was boxed in; he had the choice of opposing and displeasing his Commander in Chief and being overruled anyway, or he could go along. He went along.<sup>1</sup>

In contrast, General George C. Marshall, according to Forrest Pogue's brilliantly written biography, supported Eisenhower's continuing personal control of Allied ground forces without a British deputy after the Battle of the Bulge because he believed fully in supporting his subordinates. In Eisenhower's words, "General Marshall will not agree to any proposal to set up a Ground Commander in Chief for this theatre. If this is done he says he will resign as Chief of Staff."<sup>2</sup> One cannot deny that Marshall was a special soldier. He was, above all, a professional who set for himself the goal of becoming Chief of Staff of the Army, and he achieved his goal without compromising his professionalism or standards of honesty, integrity, or loyalty. As Army Chief of Staff,

He had seen that it was the special task of the Army to win the trust of the Congress and of the nation at large. He had sought their approbation by frank discussions with the committees before which he appeared, expert briefings of Congressional representatives and of the press, candid revelations to investigating committees, and his determination to find and punish derelictions and failure in the Army.<sup>3</sup>

The three cases above raise some interesting questions: did the German General Staff react as professionals or in self-serving, careerist ways? If General Wheeler had answered the question as a professional, would his answer and probable resignation have helped to shape debate about the nature of the US commitment in Vietnam? Could Marshall have reached the heights he did without practicing his standards? The writer suggests that the US Army needs more men of George C. Marshall's caliber. One can easily state that times have changed and that the modern Army operates under circumstances different from those that faced Marshall. But such statements ignore the strength of Marshall's character—his honesty, integrity, and

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loyalty. These qualities were the foundation for a brilliant career. Speaker of the House Sam Rayburn described the general in these terms: "Marshall was simple, able, candid. He laid it on the line. He would always tell the truth even if it hurt his cause. Congress always respected him."<sup>4</sup>

This review of history is necessary in the light of recent writings on ethics and professionalism. Numerous studies have thoroughly scrutinized internal problems caused or exacerbated by the Vietnam war. Beginning with the seminal *Study on Military Professionalism*, the internal health and vigor of the institution has been the subject of continuing critiques. Some of the authors—Hauser, Bradford, Brown, and Drisko—are still on active duty, and L. S. Sorley, Douglas Kinnard and Paul Savage are retired officers. Richard Gabriel, who co-authored *Crisis in Command* with Savage, is a Reserve officer. These writers and the authors of an Army War College (AWC) report in 1970 are accurate in their analysis, but they seem to miss a key question. How does an organization reform itself? In the words of an insider, "The Army knows how to look at a problem analytically and can accurately describe the malaise, but it does not know how to take that critique and transform it into a viable policy."<sup>5</sup>

The writer contends that the ethical climate of the Army, as measured by the AWC Study, has not drastically changed, even with the introduction of many reforms recommended by the authors of the study. The Army needs to improve its internal ethical health by returning to standards of integrity based on Marshall's example. Some services contend that the external environment is different in the seventies. But the point is that the Army has deviated from its traditional standards of honesty, integrity, and loyalty and has fostered an environment that emphasizes rewards and promotions based on careerist rather than professional standards.

A review of the AWC Study and subsequent studies shows that the problem is not one of further definition. The studies conclude that the climate has not changed and suggest that reform is the solution. How does change take place in an organization that follows a strict chain of command. The AWC Study made a number of recommendations and the Army implemented many of them.

### a. Teaching of ethics in the Army school system

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- b. Making battalion and brigade command assignments from Department of the Army level
- c. Giving stability in command assignments precedence over other assignment considerations
- d. Lengthening time-in-grade requirements for promotion from first lieutenant to captain and centralizing promotion to captain at Department of the Army level
- e. Eliminating "by-name" assignments
- f. Providing instruction in counseling subordinates at the advanced course
- g. Making stability in command positions at battalion and brigade level first among assignment and military education priorities
- h. Adopting an officer personnel management system to develop primary and secondary specialties.<sup>6</sup>

But it did not adopt recommendations for an officer's creed, removal of specific gates in a combat arms officer's optimum career pattern, and immediate disciplinary action against officers who violate ethical standards. These recommendations, perhaps the most important, were based on a finding that officers of all ranks perceived a difference between the Army's operating values and its ideal values.

Although comparison with the AWC Study was not the primary purpose of his research, Melvin Drisko measured Army officers' perceptions of the ethical climate seven years after the AWC Study. Based on empirical data, his study of professional military ethics (PME) in 1977 found substantially the same acceptance of the code, "Duty, Honor, Country," as the ideal basis for moral and professional decisionmaking.<sup>7</sup> The AWC Study pursued qualitative data through group discussions and narrative responses from questionnaires, but Drisko captured similar data through an openminded question in his survey. The following table taken from Drisko's research compares the subjective themes viewed as causative factors in value dissimilarity and unethical conduct. Drisko concludes:

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Both studies (AWC/PME) show no significant evidence that contemporary sociological pressures were the primary causes of differences perceived between the ideal and actual standards or reasons for unethical behaviors exhibited by the officer corps. The problems are largely generated internally—within the Army itself—and will only be solved as we deal with those problems honestly and directly.

Thus, Drisko found that, despite certain reforms, the same problems causing a dysfunctional environment in 1970 had not changed in the seven intervening years.<sup>8</sup>

Lewis Sorley based his recent paper "*Professional Evaluation and Combat Readiness*" (1978) on survey data relating to the use of statistical indicators. Both the AWC Study and the PME Study listed statistical pressures as causative factors in creating an environment conducive to violating ideal standards. The participants in the AWC Study felt that statistics were too often used as a tool for officer appraisal and not as an aid to resource management. They felt that the Officer Efficiency Report (OER), readiness reporting, and the proverbial CYA ("cover your ass") syndrome resulted from misuse of statistical indicators. In Sorley's words:

My strong impression is that senior officers who are too busy, too insecure, too inept, or too lazy to get out and evaluate their subordinates at first hand are too often tempted to rely on safe statistical comparisons as the basis for rating them. The neat and concrete documentation of statistics can be substituted for professional judgment, in effect excusing the rater from having to justify an evaluation for which he is personally responsible.<sup>9</sup>

In "It Tolls for Thee," another paper written on the effects of the Vietnam war on the Army, Sorley makes a particularly trenchant observation on the use of numbers:

Even this state of affairs (reliance on statistics) could have been kept within tolerable limits if the attitudes up the chain of command had been discouragement of dishonest reporting, but all too often the opposite was the case, with more senior commanders placing heavy pressure on subordinates to come up with more favorable statistics.<sup>10</sup>

The effects of senior commanders' addiction to statistical data were insidious: they were a cancer eating at the Army's integrity and

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TABLE 1

COMPARISON OF SUBJECTIVE THEMES WHICH IDENTIFY AND EXPLAIN  
CAUSATION OF VALUE DISSIMILARITY/UNETHICAL CONDUCT

<u>1970 USAWC Professionalism Study</u>	<u>1977 PME Study</u>
Selfish and Ambitious Behavior; Passing the Buck	Cover Up to Look Good; Tell Superiors What They Want to Hear
Mission Accomplishment—Regardless of Means or Importance	"Can Do"/"Zero Defects" Syndrome
Distortion of Reports—including OER	OERs—Career Survival; Readiness Reports-AWOL; Lack of Integrity in Senior Officers
Squelching Initiative—"Don't Rock the Boat"	Cover Up to Look Good; Tell Superiors What They Want to Hear
Varying Standards—Sustain Workload	"Can Do" Syndrome; Cover Up to Look Good; Lack of Integrity in Senior Officers
Army System of Rewards	Cover Up to Look Good; "Can Do" Syndrome
Lying, Cheating, Stealing	Lack of Integrity in Senior Officers; "Zero Defects" Syndrome; "Cover Your Ass"; Tell Supervisors What They Want to Hear; Pressure on Junior Officers; Cover Up to Look Good
Tolerating Deviance	Leaders Set the Example; Ethics Start at Highest Levels; "Cover Your Ass"
No Time or Excuse for Failure	No Freedom to Fail; "Zero Defects" Syndrome
Statistical Pressures	OER/Career Survival; Readiness Report-AWOLs; "Cover Your Ass"; Cover Up to Look Good
Improper Goals/Quotas	"Can Do" Syndrome
Pressure to Remain Competitive	OER/Career Survival; Cover Up to Look Good
Legalism	"Cover Your Ass"
Loyalty Up—Not Down	Tell the Boss What He Wants to Hear; Lack of Integrity; Cover Up to Look Good
Lack of Moral Courage/Self Discipline	"Cover Your Ass"; Tell the Boss What He Wants to Hear; Lack of Integrity in Senior Officers; Cover Up to Look Good; "Can Do"/"Zero Defects" Syndrome

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honesty. More important, this example helps point out the special relationship between the top of the Army's ladder of command and officers on the lower rungs. Sorley concludes with these remarks:

Thus instead of the institutional bias being in favor of professional integrity and reliability in reporting, it became instead just the opposite, a kind of unspoken conclusion in deception. Looking back, or around, at this phenomenon, some have even argued that it became so pervasive that it amounted to self-deception as well, that the officer corps lost its ability to discriminate between what was real and what was fabricated, so that ultimately it lost its claim not only to integrity but to competence as well.<sup>11</sup>

Although Sorley's analysis pertains mainly to the Vietnam era, a study entitled *The US Army Unit Readiness Reporting System* by the Strategic Studies Institute (SSI) at Carlisle Barracks in 1976 confirms his thesis. In describing problems in the reporting system, the study showed that the Army's reliance on statistical data forces a commander to rationalize or, in some cases, lie to protect not so much his career but his ability to compete with his peers. In the words of the study, "The one concern which dominated throughout . . . was that the reporting system should function with integrity and produce valid and reliable results." Yet the report made the following assessment:

Seventy-three percent said the underlying causes for OER inflation are "the competitive nature of the Army—OERs, career advancement," and "command policy to look as good as we can." In this environment which rewards success, there is a real or imagined pressure for inflation by higher headquarters. Short command duration, its extreme significance, and the desire to get ahead collectively create a fear of nonsuccess leading frequently to command rationalizations which stretch the truth. Feelings of guilt were expressed by commanders over the necessity of "manipulating" since, although the reports met the letter of AR 220-1 and so were not false *per se*, the commanders felt the report did not meet the spirit of the regulation. This state of affairs, presenting a distorted picture of the unit's actual state of combat readiness, leaves these commanders with an intense feeling of frustration and a very cynical view of readiness reporting. They see themselves as unable to realize the high degree of professional and ethical conduct to which they aspire, but yet do not deem themselves as dishonest since their reports remain technically within the rules of the system.<sup>12</sup>

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A key theme of both the AWC Study and the SSI Study was junior officer concern with the subject of professionalism and ethics. In fact, concern is too mild; junior officers were adamant in their desire for high standards. According to the AWC Study, "they reflected as a group a deep commitment to the ideal of duty, honor, country. They were intolerant of others—be they subordinates, peers, or seniors—who transgressed." The SSI Study concluded: "The young leaders of the Army want to *tell it like it is* and *have something done about it*." A survey entitled "The Role of the Company Commander" by the Seventh US Army also reflected this feeling.<sup>13</sup>

Seventy captains who participated in the survey were concerned that their seniors would whitewash or filter the results of the survey. Before undertaking it, they adopted three ground rules: anonymity, no filtering or whitewashing, and delivery of a copy of the report to each participant. The captains wanted their senior commanders to listen not only to good news but also to unfavorable news, and they wanted feedback. As a group, they perceived that commanders in the middle of the chain of command would try to mute their responses.

This phenomena is not confined to the junior officer ranks; it appears in the enlisted ranks as well. In a forthcoming study on alienation in the service, Steven Westbrook states that 37 percent of the enlisted personnel included in his survey research feel that their immediate military leaders—junior officers and sergeants—are not concerned about them. Twenty-eight percent could not trust their immediate leadership.<sup>14</sup> And, despite an average of 16 months in command roles, the captains in the Seventh Army study seemed to echo the same sentiments—alienation from the chain of command.

The captains were apparently satisfied with their commands: 71 percent were somewhat to very satisfied, and only 29 percent were somewhat to very dissatisfied. However, when the data is analyzed by type of unit, commanders of combat service support units paint a much different picture. Only 23 percent were somewhat to very satisfied and the remainder, 77 percent, were somewhat to very dissatisfied.<sup>15</sup>

Although the company commanders, as a group, were reasonably satisfied with their commands, they had specific opinions about command problems. They enjoyed the daily challenge of a real mission with real allies on a potential field of battle, as opposed to a

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pure training mission with a CONUS command. But they identified areas of serious concern that seem to echo the findings of other studies. That is, they seem to question whether senior officers who monitor the system listen to their perceptions of its dysfunctions.

Company commanders are convinced that at every level the commanders and staffs accept requirements and tasks without regard to impact on lower command. Because everyone wants to be a "can do" man, "Nobody has the b---s to say No!"

Because of their fear of failure, battalion and brigade commanders place a number one priority on everything; while at the same time senior officers are perceived to be career oriented and willing to sacrifice anyone to prove that they can make the system work.

On the other hand company commanders think they are expected to be experts yesterday. They are expected to be loyal, but receive no loyalty in return. Along this line, they question OER standards and honestly believe their OER hinges on last month's crisis and not how well they do in the long run.<sup>16</sup>

One must remember that these men have served an average of 16 months in command and thus cannot be considered neophytes in the command environment. Twenty-eight wives participated in the survey and provided insights into the system. "My husband's CO uses fear to motivate constantly. He is reminded constantly that a low score on an inspection will be reflected in his OER." Another wife noted: "My husband is forced to compromise his personal integrity in order to survive."<sup>17</sup>

The company commanders reflected their idealism in their perception of their own priorities and the priorities of senior commanders and staff officers.

### **Priorities of Company Commanders**

1. Train troops for the mission
2. Maintain equipment for the mission
3. Take care of troops and dependents
4. Reenlist good men
5. Enjoy Europe and family life
6. Get ahead in the Army

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### *Priorities of Senior Commanders and Staffs*

1. Get ahead in the Army
2. Push programs to look good, e.g., reenlist anyone
3. Train troops to pass inspections
4. Maintain equipment to pass inspections
5. Take care of troops and dependents
6. Enjoy Europe and family life<sup>18</sup>

The list shows that the NATO security mission underlies the decisions of company commanders, but it suggests that the senior commander and his staff make decisions for careerist reasons.

With respect to readiness reporting, the company commanders felt that pressures to look good stemmed from the desire of senior commanders to pursue career aims. A brigade commander was quoted as saying, "Some vehicles can't go down; I don't want to hear otherwise." Junior commanders felt that the readiness condition was not as good as it was perceived by higher commanders. One company commander stated: "My integrity is challenged because I am told how to write my report." In the area of training—the Army's peacetime mission—junior commanders state that they train to pass inspection, not to perform their mission. According to Army doctrine, the Army Training and Evaluation Program (ARTEP) is a diagnostic tool used to discover training strengths and weaknesses, but junior commanders state that it is used to write their OERs. For them, the cosmetic effect of statistical success is the hallmark of a European command tour. The study concludes: "They honestly believe that higher commanders are willing to sacrifice almost anyone to prove they can make the 'system,' however conceived, work."<sup>19</sup>

The company commanders saw an acute need to emphasize professionalism over careerism, to believe the word of a company commander, and to be respected for their integrity. Their wives believed that the Commander in Chief, Seventh US Army, should assist his senior commanders in developing positive leadership techniques and in establishing two-way communications to provide feedback for their husbands.<sup>20</sup>

The AWC Study defined the problem areas and offered approaches for the Army to follow in implementing its recommendations. The Army adopted many of the ideas. Yet, as demonstrated by Drisko's PME Study, the SSI Readiness Study, and the Seventh US

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Army's study of company commanders, the Army has not progressed far enough in resolving problems in professionalism and ethics. If emphasis on ethics has not resulted in change, other areas, such as training, have also been slow to change. In 1971 the Board for Dynamic Training identified problem areas, including turbulence, lack of training-supported materials and excessive distractors, such as post support duties. A survey of the training environment by John Blair and David Segal in 1978 shows that little perceived change had occurred in the training environment since 1971.<sup>21</sup> Change comes slowly in any organization, especially in areas where vested interests are at stake. In most instances, senior leaders in control of the system have used it to reach the pinnacle, and they have very little to gain by changing it.

In an organizational environment of constrained manpower dollars and time, senior leaders manage by exception; that is, they focus on problem areas. In order to have a good unit and "keep the senior guys off your back," the commander must insure correct numbers. As the readiness study indicates, the practice is to use as many built-in manipulative factors as possible, thus placing the commander on the edge of the ethical dilemma and marking the beginning of the vicious competitive cycle. Good numbers for the unit on ARTEPs, AGI, and METs mean good numbers for the commanders on OERs; good OERs mean the successful passage of an intermediate career hurdle and a new set of environmental pressures for good statistics during the next passage. Thus, the Army's reliance on statistics—body counts, AWOLs, re-ups, AGIs, or METs—subjects the integrity of the individual to immense pressure.

The causes of this environmental stress on integrity are not rooted in society but internally within the Army. A turbulent personnel system and regularized rites of passage let officers know exactly where they stand in relationship to their peers. Regularization has caused very intense and often destructive competition for individuals and the institution. Since the members of the brotherhood of officers share a common cause—sacrifice for their country—anyone who takes advantage of the system violates the trust of fellow professionals.<sup>22</sup>

Improvement of the ethical climate of the military requires two significant changes. The first change involves the philosophy of leadership held by senior officers; the second involves internalization

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of the Army's ideal values of honesty and integrity, as subsumed into the perceived motto, "duty, honor, country." The AWC, PME, and SSI studies, and the study of the company commander, charge senior levels of leadership with the responsibility for setting and maintaining ethical standards. Drisko states this idea in these terms:

To be credible, emphasis on ethical conduct in the officer corps must start at the top. Leaders at all levels must set the example. Anything less will only increase the cynicism which already exists in the officer ranks in the perception of the "Do as I say, not as I do" syndrome.<sup>23</sup>

The present system helps to create this cynicism. Drisko points out that, in the event of a transgression, "the perception is that the higher the officer's grade, the greater the probability he will not receive punishment." He further notes that 63 percent of his respondents did not believe that the profession rewards ethical behavior. Although it may not be proper or even possible to reward everyone for performing in an ethical manner, people who adhere to ethical standards will at least be rewarded indirectly if the system punishes the unethical manipulator. Thus, senior commanders need to espouse an ethical code and *practice it*. By acting in this fashion, they would create an environment in which ethical behavior is its own reward.

An example of the institution's understanding of the need to implement change in the ethical climate is reflected in the ongoing research on leadership at the Administration Center at Fort Benjamin Harrison. In Leadership Monograph 8, Stephen Clement and Donna Ayers have constructed a matrix for the five levels of leadership within the Army. For each of the five levels—lieutenants, captains, majors/lieutenant colonels, colonels, and general officers—the authors identified nine functional skill areas which leaders perform in the organizational context. The nine areas include skills such as communication, supervision, management science, and ethics. The authors, in developing this model, have recognized that an officer's ethical foundation permeates the communication/decision-making process. The young officer begins building this ethical base by becoming a consistent and conforming role model. At the top and executive level—colonel and general officer—the officer not only demonstrates and reinforces ethical behavior, but also articulates an appropriate organizational value system and focuses on integrity and

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reputation. In outlining the ethical dimensions of the general officer/executive, the authors have reinforced the premise that the senior leadership of the Army creates the environment which is conducive to ethical conduct. If the executive leadership of the Army were to act in such a fashion—as exemplars of the moral fiber of the institution—they would regain the credibility the aforementioned studies say they have lost.

Both tradition and bureaucratic inertia make organizational reform difficult for the Army. Effective reform can come from sources outside or within the system. But reform from external sources is difficult to perceive in the current socio-political environment. And internal reform also appears difficult since the institution makes decisions based on dollar, time, or manpower constraints rather than ethical criteria. The authors of the AWC Study believed that reform must be "instituted from the top of the Army."<sup>25</sup> But they did not foresee the possibility that their recommendations would be lost in the bureaucratic shuffle and that senior leaders would not fully understand them. Their premise is sound, but this writer doubts that senior leaders can ever escape the system that gave them success.

A third possibility for reform can come from the bottom or lower echelons of the organization. Although only 35 percent of the respondents in Drisko's research believed that ethics was taught moderately to very effectively in the service schools, the programs are at least partially effective. Leadership Monograph 13, *A Leadership Model for Organizational Ethics*, by Stephen Clement and Donna Ayers can serve as an excellent model for school curriculum development.<sup>26</sup> Servicewide seminars on ethics meet at Department of Army Headquarters on a regular basis, and the department has published a pamphlet on ethics. These efforts may quite possibly build an ethical foundation for the officer corps, but they will not solve the organizational problem that defines promotion as success. There are no easy answers to the problem, but the Army's freedom to act professionally in the future may depend on the ethical dimensions of its senior leaders.

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### **ENDNOTES TO ETHICS IN THE MILITARY PROFESSION: THE CONTINUING TENSION**

1. Joachim Fest, *The Face of the Third Reich* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1970), p. 272; David Halberstam, *The Best and the Brightest* (Greenwich, CT: Fawcett, 1973), p. 728.
2. Forrest C. Pogue, *George C. Marshall: Organizer of Victory, 1943-1945* (New York: The Viking Press, 1973), p. 511.
3. Ibid., p. xiii.
4. Ibid., p. 131.
5. US Army War College, *Study on Military Professionalism* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: 1970), hereafter cited as AWC Study. William Hauser's scholarly work is the first of the post-Vietnam introspection—*America's Army in Crisis* (Baltimore: John's Hopkins University Press, 1973). Zeb Bradford and Frederic J. Brown prescribed how the Army should change to meet its national security mission. *The US Army in Transition* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1974). Retired BG Douglas Kinnard surveyed the attitudes of general officers who served in Vietnam. *The War Managers* (Hanover, NH: published for the University of Vermont by the University Press of New England, 1977). Richard Gabriel and Paul Savage critiqued the management of the Army in *Crisis in Command* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978).
6. AWC Study, pp. 38-44.
7. Melville A. Drisko, *An Analysis of Professional Military Ethics* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: 1977), cited as PME Study, p. 45. This was an individual student study project at the US Army War College.
8. Ibid., pp. 36, 37.
9. Lewis S. Sorley, "Professional Evaluation and Combat Readiness," paper presented at the Southwest Regional Conference IUS Seminar on Armed Forces and Society, Dallas, Texas, April 1978, p. 9.
10. "It Tolls for Thee," Lewis S. Sorley, unpublished paper, p. 10.
11. Ibid.
12. US Army Strategic Studies Institute, *US Army Readiness Reporting* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: 1976), pp. 3, xi.

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13. AWC Study, p. iii; *US Army Readiness Reporting*, p. 2; Assistant Chief of Staff, G-1, VII Corps, 7th US Army (Germany), "Role of the Company Commander," cited as "Company Commander."
14. Steven Westbrook, "The Impact of Socio-Political Alienation on General Military Efficiency," p. 24.
15. "Company Commander", p. 11.
16. Ibid., pp. 17-18.
17. Ibid., p. 20.
18. Ibid., pp. 21-22.
19. Ibid., p. 12.
20. Ibid., pp. 71-73.
21. David Segal and John Blair, "Survey on Perceptions of Army Training—1978," unpublished survey.
22. The writer could be criticized for making this analysis of the Army's ethical environment based upon studies which are "outdated" at the time of publication. However, in 1979 the US Army War College completed a 10-year followup to the 1970 AWC Study. The results of the study were released by the Army's senior commanders. The preliminary analysis demonstrated that the ethical climate had not significantly changed from 1970. One can only conclude that the ethical norms of integrity and honesty are not perceived as being practiced by today's officer corps. The conclusion of the 1970 study was that a "significant difference between the ideal values and the actual or operational values" still exists. While these values can never coincide, the Army's ability to function as an effective organization will be impaired unless it makes a strong effort to approach the ideal values. It cannot continue to define promotion as professional growth, promotion which comes only after a ticket-punching career. The cited studies all show the distaste the officers feel for this system.
23. PME Study, p. 40.
24. Steven D. Clement and Donna B. Ayers, *A Matrix of Organizational Leadership Dimensions* (Ft. Benjamin Harrison, IN: 1976), p. 77.
25. AWC Study, p. vi.
26. Stephen D. Clement and Donna Ayres, *A Leadership Model for Organizational Ethics* (Ft. Benjamin Harrison, IN: 1979). Through this and their other

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research, the study of ethics can be geared to those problems peculiar to command at various levels in the Army school system—from defining the enemy at the company level, through the use of statistics at the field grade level, to the manipulation of data and setting up of a value system at the general officer level. By discussing these issues in a school setting, the officer will have time to analyze the complex issues which will be faced in a real-time situation. The easier it becomes to discuss ethical dilemmas, the easier it will be to make an ethical decision in the face of the environmental pressures.

### **3.**

## **COMPETENCE AS ETHICAL IMPERATIVE: ISSUES OF PROFESSIONALISM**

**Lewis S. Sorley**

The thesis is in the title. The nature of the military profession, and the responsibilities of the profession to the society it serves, are such as to elevate professional competence to the level of an ethical imperative. The implications are pervasive, going to virtually every aspect of the selection, training, assignment and evaluation of the officer corps, and to the most basic aspects of the organization, leadership, and employment of military units. An obligation to respond to the imperative rests upon every officer in whatever role he or she plays, from commander to personnel manager to trainer to follower, and the same obligation rests upon the institution in its design and implementation of institutional policies and practices which affect individual and corporate competence.

One might begin with the philosophical point that a man's obligation in life is to do the best he can, to make the most of whatever combination of talents and intellect he possesses, and that is an appealing prospect. Yet, a world characterized by universal pursuit of such an ideal is almost literally beyond the imagination, one scarcely daring to conceive what might then be accomplished by mankind. Not all men

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are, or can be, inspired to follow such a course, but the effects of this on society at large are variable, depending upon the profession of those involved. It is generally recognized that some endeavors rely heavily upon a public service ethic, and an important component of what makes certain callings "professions" is that they acknowledge an obligation on the part of members of the profession, both individually and collectively, to serve the general interest. This obligation reaches perhaps its purest form in military service involving combat, where the obligation to serve the general interest is typically to do so *instead of*, rather than *in addition to*, one's own self-interest, even to the extent of sacrificing one's life.

It is this prospect which undergirds much of the code of professionalism which has flourished in successful military establishments. Deriving from the stark prospect of having at some point to face making the ultimate sacrifice, and require it of one's followers, professionalism has placed heavy emphasis on selflessness; loyalty to the nation, the organization and one's fellow soldiers; discipline; austerity; and personal bravery. As students of military history know so well, there are numerous examples of armies embracing these virtues which have defeated better armed and more numerous opponents, and in fact quite recent examples are not hard to find. One thinks also of Beowulf's band of followers, disbelieving in any eternal life after death, clustered in the darkness about the funeral pyre of their fallen leader. In their mythology, the only hope of immortality lay in being remembered by one's comrades, and that in turn was dependent upon performing deeds worthy of being remembered. Personal worth and adherence to the warrior's code were the only means of redemption.

The larger point, from the standpoint of society, is that it makes much more difference in terms of some pursuits whether a strong professional ethic is adhered to than it does in others. A less demanding level of performance can be tolerated, for example, on the part of gardeners taken as a group than of firefighters. It is less important to society that some automobile repairmen are less skilled and conscientious than others (no matter how aggravating this may be) than may be the case with physicians. The potential impact of generally low levels of competence would be less among athletes than among construction engineers. None of this is meant to suggest that individuals or groups which waste their potential or fail to meet high standards of performance are without cost to society. Quite the

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contrary, crucial aspects of a society's health and viability are in important ways dependent upon the national morale, self-conception, and shared values, which are in turn the result of innumerable actions and attitudes. But without denying that point, we are here concerned with the even more basic fact that societies depend upon some professions for their very means of survival in a dangerous and uncertain world. Prominent among these is of course the military profession. Golda Meir made the point in her memoirs, observing that "the most essential public service for all in Israel, unfortunately, is the army...."<sup>1</sup> The late Alastair Buchan put it in broader terms: "because there is a qualitative difference between, on the one hand, riches and poverty and, on the other, life and death, the strategic plan inevitably has a certain primacy. ...."<sup>2</sup>

It is this primacy which imparts the force of ethical imperative to the requirement for professional military competence. The point is in itself really a very simple one: nations are critically dependent upon their armed forces for survival, and thus the competence of those forces is of graver concern and more general impact than that of any other profession. The obligations which this responsibility imposes are immense, and form the basis for the equation of competence on the part of members of the profession with an ethical imperative.

### **Some Dimensions of Competence**

Competence must be conceived in perspective and in context.<sup>3</sup> All too familiar is the kind of ethical obtuseness which leads an officer to tell his subordinates just to get the job done, adding or implying "and I don't care how you do it." Typically such people argue self-righteously that they are performance oriented, "doers" rather than some alternative they usually do not define, and that the mission is their paramount concern. Such an outlook is all right to a point, and indeed in moderation is an important part of the professional ethic. Where it falls short of an acceptable definition of competence is in failing to appreciate, or perhaps even be aware of, the second and third order consequences of the short term and expedient approach to doing the job.

Thus the commander who insists on working his unit for a month of nights and weekends—to attain marginally improved results on a maintenance inspection of aging equipment for which there is an in-

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adequate supply of parts and which has for a decade been chronically undermaintained—typically asserts that he is getting the job done. That perspective is not always endorsed by his subordinates, who share that sensitive barometer of diminishing returns possessed by all who have to actually do the work. What is more important, they may be right. When the results are clearly disproportionate to the effort expended, and moreover make little genuine difference in any event, the competence of the commander may come to be viewed in a somewhat different light. And when the result of compounding many such events is that some of the better young officers and noncoms decide the profession's leadership does not represent the kind of people they want to spend their working lives associating with, the competence of a commander who cannot attract and retain the most promising of his subordinates is also brought into question. The lack of perspective, and inability to appreciate the longer-term impact of present policies, is thus a fatal deficiency of competence. Unfortunately, in recent years, it has not been similarly fatal to the career aspirations of those exhibiting it, for the standards of evaluation being applied have failed to penalize those who exploit their units to advance their own interests.

Context is also an important aspect of competence, enabling commanders to appreciate what is appropriate in a combat situation, for example, that would not be acceptable for routine garrison practice. A dramatic case involved Colonel George Jarrett, an expert on armaments who was ammunition advisor to the British in North Africa in 1942. His greatest moment came when the British ran short of 75mm tank gun ammunition, and turned to him for help. Colonel Jarrett learned that there was some superior quality German 75mm ammunition which had been captured at Tobruk, but which would not fit the British guns because the rotating band was too large. He thereupon set up a mobile machine shop on the banks of the Suez Canal, where each shell was mounted on a lathe and the rotating band was turned down by Royal Ordnance Corps technicians. Colonel Jarrett knew that the German 75mm ammunition became fully armed when rotated at 1500 rpm, so he kept the lathes turning no faster than 400 rpm. There were no accidents, and some 17,000 of these shells played a vital part in later battles of the North African campaign.<sup>4</sup> What in peacetime might have been a foolhardy adventure became in the context of combat exigencies a prudent and courageous risk.

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Neglect of context and perspective is, unfortunately, too often the character of what passes for professionalism and competence in our military establishment at present. Short term goals are pursued without regard to the longer-term consequences of either the means or ends of that pursuit. Reinforcing this tendency is the reality that self-interest is often served in so doing, as seniors who themselves lack the true competence to sort out the significant from the flashy, and the lastingly effective from the transitorily attractive, are unduly impressed with—and reward—the energetic accomplishment of meaningless things. One of the saddening aspects of observing such things over a period of years is that this insight is not hard to come by, and it is the troops least of all who are fooled by such sham and pretence. Beetle Bailey made the point in one of Mort Walker's most telling cartoon strips: Beetle, lounging under a tree, spots Sarge approaching. Leaping to his feet, Beetle commences to strike and stomp the ground, uttering karate-like cries as he does so, and earning from Sarge an approving "Attaway, Beetle!" Once more reclining under his tree as Sarge passes out of sight, Beetle all too accurately observes that "the Army doesn't care what you do as long as you do it with vigor!"<sup>5</sup> This amounts to an institutionalized enthusiasm for what Lewis Mumford has called, in another context, "aimless dynamism."<sup>6</sup> The therapist Erich Fromm reflected a similar understanding some years ago when he took out a large newspaper advertisement to explain why he favored a particular political candidate. The heart of his position was support for humanist values, and he couched these in terms of opposition to "the individual who believes himself to be active when he is only 'busy' . . . and a way of life in which restless activity is a purpose in itself. . ." Such fundamental distinctions have yet to be widely manifested in reformed military institutional practices.

This illustrates the common problem, the commander who cannot or will not sort out the significant from that which does not matter, and protect his troops from exploitation in the service of the latter, thereby conserving both their energy and their motivation for dealing with meaningful challenges. But there is another even more insidious version, the commander who does not care about real results, whether in worthwhile pursuits or make-work, but only about the appearance of achievement. Typically this is calculated to impress his superiors and earn him recognition and promotion. Sometimes it is even in response to similar motives on the part of those more senior commanders. In this formulation the definition of getting the job done is to make it appear that it has been done, so that subordinates come

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under pressure to submit inflated reports of body count, operationally ready rates for equipment, and a raft of other statistical "indicators" which will reflect favorably on the higher unit commander. This is not only a corrupting practice, but also one that raises the gravest questions for national security when, compounded, the results may lead national leaders to conclude that military forces can achieve tasks for which they are in reality unprepared. It is not hard to conceive of circumstances in which this could constitute a prescription for disaster.

It can probably be stated, in theory at least, that honesty is an essential element of professional competence, and that in the American military ethic this is taken as a given. While practice and precept are frequently far apart, the shortcomings still are viewed as failures to live up to the precept, no matter how common have become their acceptance and in some cases encouragement in day to day practice. But there seems to be less recognition of, and far more ambivalence toward, the obligation of competence to sort out what is significant and concentrate on that, and to devise measures of merit which go to that which matters. Too often that which is easily measured, being quantifiable, is taken as an indicator of performance, whether that means measuring traffic tickets issued to members of a unit or the ups and downs of chapel attendance. In part this derives from the greater difficulty of measuring more important but less quantifiable aspects of performance. A unit's morale cannot be checked with a dip stick, nor its state of training or discipline measured fully by surrogate statistical compilations. Maneuver sense, flexibility, and resilience under stress are judgmental. This fact means they are all difficult to assess, and that brings us back to competence.

The senior commander who knows a good job when he sees it, and furthermore who can teach his subordinate units to do what he wants them to be able to do, has the competence—and confidence—to make evaluations which depend upon his professional knowledge and experience, and to justify them to himself, those being evaluated, and his superiors in terms that will inspire belief in his fairness and accuracy. This being a difficult task, weak and inadequate commanders seek to avoid it, relying instead upon statistical indicators with which they are more comfortable. The numbers take care of themselves, and judgments based upon them do not have to be backed by one's own professional judgment. So no matter how meaningless the numbers, or how unrelated to actual professional ability, they come to have a life of their own. This problem cannot, in my view, be dealt with

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by admonition or regulation. The sole remedy is the assignment to command of officers who have the professional knowledge, confidence, and ability to teach and to make evaluations on a sound basis, and to leave them in place for the extended periods necessary for them to reform present practice.

Competence implies perspective and judgment, then, not unreasoning and unrelenting pursuit of marginal increments of progress—especially when such increments are themselves without significance—and self-restraint. It also implies balance, and the ability to appreciate the larger and longer-term consequences of institutional practices. A thoughtful newspaper editor recently recounted the investigative reporting on local problems which had been done by his staff on the *Dayton Daily News*, leading a colleague's mother to tell him that she wouldn't live in Dayton because it was too corrupt. This came as a jolt:

We were both shaken by her reaction. Neither of us feels that way at all about the city. We think Dayton is a very fine place. We like living here.

That, nevertheless, was the final message of the coverage, which we feel was useful and necessary. We never meant to say anything like that about Dayton.

In trying to come to grips with this unintended second order effect of what he had viewed as a fine job being done by his reporters, the editor observed that "our journalism seems too often deprived of a purpose larger than journalism, and we are forbidden by the rules to consider a larger purpose."

The responsibilities of the military profession are such, I have been arguing, that it simply *must not* fail to consider a purpose larger than itself, or abide rules or practices which do not serve that larger purpose. Events demonstrate, however, that it *can* in fact do so, and thus we are forced to reformulate the imperative to assert that it cannot fail to do so without grave consequences for the profession and the society it serves. Examples abound, each in itself deserving of comprehensive treatment which is beyond the scope of this discussion. A single controversial case may suffice for illustrative purposes. For a number of years following termination of the military draft, the several services, but the Army in particular, adopted a recruiting ap-

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proach which was in essence an economically-based appeal to self-interest. No mention was made of opportunities, much less obligations, to serve one's country. The vicissitudes of military life and the necessity for adaptation and change on the part of those who joined it were deliberately downplayed, as embodied in the slogan "The Army wants to join you," implying that it was the Army which would do the adapting.

This approach succeeded for some time in attracting something close to the requisite number of individuals to fill the ranks of the Army (an Army which, fortunately for the recruiting effort, had been reduced to half its size at the peak of the Vietnam War, and a total manning level for all the services 500,000 below the *pre-Vietnam* level). But it also brought about an unprecedented situation in which one of every three recruits failed to complete his first enlistment, being discharged early because of ineptitude, disciplinary problems, or behavioral disorders. And it led to an appeal which fell woefully short in attracting men to the combat arms, the heart and soul of a fighting force. Professor Charles Moskos recently told a House Armed Services Committee subcommittee that this was "a grievous flaw," one which he defined as the "redefinition of military service in terms of the economic marketplace and the cash-work nexus." A further consequence, he continued, was that "the standard that military participation ought to be a citizen's duty has been blurred."<sup>8</sup> There may be no better example of the way in which a decision motivated by short term expediency, while leading to marginally satisfactory accomplishment of the immediate objective (and even that is questionable, in my view), introduced in the process effects of potentially far greater disadvantageous impact in the longer run. This judgment applies with equal force to the original decision to terminate (rather than reform) the draft and to the subsequent econometric approach to attracting a volunteer force.

Competence thus implies perspective, an appreciation of context, judgment, balance, and self-restraint. It should be noted that these are qualities which go well beyond any definition confined to simple technical knowledge of the mechanics of a given assignment, which is a necessary but not sufficient aspect of competence. Having sketched the dimensions of our working definition of competence and our base assertions of the ethical imperative of competence in the military establishment, next we must consider the implications for both individual and institutional practices of this imperative. There is a

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central component of every role an officer is called upon to play—commander, staff officer, professional example, follower—which involves this ethical imperative. And it pervades a great many institutional practices as well. The impact appears most pronounced in the realms of individual professionalism, assignment policies, and training practices.

### **The Professional Ethic**

Volumes have been written about the professional canon of officership, and about its particular manifestation in the American armed forces. Much could be said of the dynamic between traditional military values and the changing externalis of a larger society in transition. For our purposes here, however, perhaps it is enough to observe that the precepts of American military professionalism—however much the practices may sometimes have differed—have consistently included a small number of core values. These have traditionally had to do with devotion to duty; loyalty to country, mission, and fellow members of the profession, and concern for them above self; commitment to integrity and decency as essential attributes of a leader; and dedication to achieving a high degree of competence. Indeed, in much that has been written by military officers themselves in America, competence and professionalism have been used as interchangeable or synonymous terms, so closely are they identified with one another in our professional ethic.

The familiar words of the officer's commission are often quoted to emphasize the "special trust and confidence" underlying the appointment. It needs also to be remembered that it is upon the officer's "patriotism, valor, fidelity and abilities" that the President depends, and without ability the other qualities count for little, however admirable they may be for their own sake. A senior officer of a decade ago put it simply and conclusively: "Insist that people know their business."

Given these declarative commitments to competence, to the extent that we are suggesting or implying the need for reform in the attention paid to competence today, it is the practice or manifestation of the ideal which may be viewed as deficient, not abstract recognition or acceptance of the principle. Anyone familiar with the complexities of developing and fielding modern armed forces in the face of constrained resources realizes the many trade-offs that must be made in

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striking a balance between present and future capabilities, operating and investment accounts, deterrence and war-fighting capacity, mobilization capability and forces in being. The judgment calls required in the course of this accommodation are both legitimate and necessary. At the same time one should recognize that other kinds of compromises exist which are not so legitimate, and which must not be tolerated. These unfavorable actions involve primarily matters of self-interest, wherein individual officers lack the self-discipline or commitment to the professional ethic to put considerations of mission, profession and followers ahead of their own narrower interests.

Sometimes vignettes contain the essence of such a complex situation, or a man. A half decade ago the Army's top commander in Europe, concerned about the unpopularity of service in his command, sent a brigadier to the War College to exhort the students to seek such assignments following graduation. Afterward not many long recalled the details of his hard sell monologue, but a great many remembered an impression which seemed to fit in with one of the general's asides: "My aide loused up the slides." Whatever views the audience might have had to that point about serving in Europe under its leadership of the moment, this choice of a spokesman and his self-revolutionary performance had a major if unintended impact in reinforcing them.

What the self-interested often fail to realize is that the degree of success or gratification they can achieve—separate and distinct from the success of their unit and achievement of the larger purpose—is paltry by comparison. The distinguished military historian Martin Blumenson underscored this point by implication in reviewing a recent history of a great World War II unit. "What gave the 2nd Armored Division a special kind of spirit, a special kind of fighting aggressiveness," he wrote, "was the quality of a succession of splendid leaders who trained the men effectively, who inspired them to devotion and service, who gave them self-confidence and who took them to the heights. . . ." And, he might have added, who set the example.

Beyond personal example, there is the entire body of custom, policy, regulation and doctrine which suffuses the armed forces, and which in important respects embodies and makes operational the ethical precepts of the institution. From evaluation techniques and parameters to assignment policies, and from recruiting approaches

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to the military school system, there is here represented the cumulative impact of the institution's concept of success, the relative values it attaches to various pursuits and accomplishments, and in sum its operational ethic. To the extent those practices serve to enhance and reward true competence, the institution will prosper . . . but only to that extent.

### **Institutional Practices**

Perhaps no element of institutional practice is more directly related to the imperative of competence than that of assignment policies. While we have implied that for an individual to seek, accept or retain a military assignment for which he lacks preparation and ability is an unethical act, a realization which must inform our estimation of the "ticket puncher," it is equally clear that to assign an officer to a military command or staff assignment for which he is unqualified is likewise an unethical act. Cronyism, personnel churning under the guise of career development, and use of assignments as rewards must be judged in this light.

We are not here condemning "making" the best use of available talent when that falls short—as it inevitably does—of the ideal. Assignment policies must be geared to the reality that officers cannot always be fully prepared for their next assignments before the fact, and that some degree of on-the-job training is a normal component of every assignment. But we are asserting that, within the necessary limitations imposed by disparities between the pool of talent and the cumulative demands of the mission, assignments must be guided by policies which serve to exploit and reinforce competence, not undermine it. One recalls Erica Jong's observation in *Fear of Flying*: "God-dam it, there's no shortage of love. The problem is one of maldistribution."<sup>10</sup> In like manner, there is in the officer corps of the military services no shortage of talent. The problem is that the talent is relentlessly churned from job to job, primarily for reasons which have to do with the presumed self-interest of the individuals involved rather than the dictates of the mission. Other related and equally undisciplined actions result in a division commander being made Comptroller of the Army so he can be promoted, for example; principals on service staffs being reassigned shortly after appointment of a new service chief, so the new man can have his "own team," thereby guaranteeing him a period of induced chaos as well; continuation of "career development" for flag officers, which translates into a string of short-term

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stays in unrelated assignments resulting in minimal (beneficial) impact, reduced accountability, sapping of the adaptive energy of the unit, and erosion of competence.

No one who has ever been on the receiving end of this constant coming and going of higher level commanders has much difficulty in grasping the quantum increase in competence and performance which would derive from instituting very simple policy dictates providing for radically extended assignment tenure for flag officers, restriction of successive assignments to closely related tasks (to wit: division commanders take over corps command upon promotion, not staff direction of research and development, or management of public affairs), and imposition of rigorous accountability for performance in these extended assignments.

Assignment policies affecting the entire officer corps could be expected to change quite markedly if the imperative of competence were emphasized in their formulation. Reassignments stemming from promotions or selections for schooling would not be permitted to override minimum assignment tenures (themselves to be prescribed as several times longer than those of current practice). War College spaces would not be diverted to accommodate officers whose responsibilities are only tangentially related to the curriculum (such as officers of the medical services and others in highly specialized pursuits), nor would such valuable assets as those officers be off the line for a year of unnecessary schooling. Progression and motivation of those moving up in a given specialty would not be undermined by lateral transfers into their career field of senior officers who are not qualified by training and experience to pull their share of the load. No doubt an exhaustive review of assignment policies which was informed by a perspective of competence first would suggest additional beneficial changes.

### **Training Practices**

In any assignment, whether to a line unit or a staff at whatever level, the entire field of training broadly conceived is infused with issues of competence. Looked at most broadly, a dedication to organizational competence implies for the leader relentless elimination of the unessential and the distracting, concentration on that which is central to development of the organization's capacity to perform effectively, and the common sense and courage to establish the resul-

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tant priorities and stick to them. It means dedication to long-term goals of real substance, and disdain for that which is merely transitory, showy or superficial. It means observing the time-honored maxim that an officer's responsibility is to do his own job to the absolute best of his ability, to learn all he can about his boss' job in case he has to take over from him on short notice in combat, and to help his own subordinates learn all they can about *his* job in case they in turn have to take over from him. By extension, this implies far greater devotion to teaching, particularly by example and in the tutorial mode, and corresponding reduction in concern with mere mechanistic evaluation. Such teaching, of course, places heavy demands on the maturity, security and professional knowledge of the teacher, and brings us back again to competence in its most comprehensive meaning.

If we are right in sensing that unrestrained self-interest has too frequently been allowed to take priority over considerations of organizational and individual competence, then it needs to be observed (recalled) that the demands of professionalism include subordination of individual desires and even well-being when necessary to meet the needs of the overall enterprise. A famous case from World War II will serve to illustrate. A member of the Congress had written to Brigadier General Ralph Pernell, then commanding a training division at Fort Ord. Would it not be possible, the Congressman inquired, to find a more important job for a highly qualified young man in the division who was then being schooled as an infantryman, and who also happened to be the son of his constituents? General Pernell responded in detail, explaining the crucial role of the foot soldier, and closing with what might be taken as a classic definition of military necessity: "Men must do that which best helps to win the war and often that is not the same as what they do best." Clearly implied, and equally relevant to our present topic, is that it also often is not that which they most wish to do.

Yet another realm which is inextricably bound up with issues of competence is the whole matter of evaluation. The standards set, the aspects measured, the means of assessing them, the relative weight accorded various elements, the fairness and visibility of the process, and the set of institutional values embodied in the relative fortunes of different units and individuals are no more nor less than a central manifestation of institutional values. Where those who prosper under the prevailing practices are distinguished by their integrity, intellect,

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technical competence, skill with people, character and vision, the system may be judged to be in accord with the ethical imperative of competence. To the extent that the self-interested, the short-sighted, the superficial and the less able are permitted to prosper, the system must be judged deficient and in need of reform. And the necessity for that reform, where it is indicated, must bear upon the shoulders and consciences of the responsible leaders with the full weight of moral obligations, given the commitment to competence which is required by the nature of their profession.

## **The Results**

The story used to be told about a sailor who, asked for a definition of "initiative" as part of the written examination for advancement to petty officer, responded that "initiative is when you do something you aren't supposed to do and it turns out good." To the Navy's everlasting glory, it is reported that he received full credit for that answer. Perhaps even more satisfying is when you do something you are supposed to do and it turns out to be good for both the institution and the individual. Ironically, dedication to competence is like that. I say ironically because it is my impression that many of the institutional pressures—which motivate officers to flit from job to job, to seek to be all things to all men, and to touch what they believe are all the bases without regard to their genuine interest in the assignments or their suitability for performing them—not only serve to undercut competence, but also in the process act to the disadvantage of most officers. Put the other way around, it seems clear that most officers would be able to perform more effectively, and thus be more successful, in a succession of stable assignments which drew upon their particular talents and background. In the doing, they could also be expected to find more genuine and lasting satisfaction.

Above a Pentagon staircase, near the office of the Secretary of Defense, hangs a large painting and the quotation from Isaiah which it illustrates: "Whom shall I send and who will go for us? . . . Here am I: send me." The willingness to serve still implies a companion factor, the competence to do so effectively. When that imperative has once again been accepted by the American officer corps—and is strongly and unequivocally supported by its leaders by precept, example and institutional practice—then the professional officer can say with pride, "send me . . . for I can do the job."

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### **ENDNOTES TO COMPETENCE AS ETHICAL IMPERATIVE: ISSUES OF PROFESSIONALISM**

1. Golda Meir, *My Life* (New York: Putnam, 1975), p. 423.
2. Alastair Buchan, *The End of the Postwar Era* (New York: Dutton, 1974), p. 79.
3. It should be made explicit that competence is a relative term, and probably in a literal sense no officer is ever absolutely competent in every aspect of any given assignment. What we are addressing is the fullest development of competence possible, and the wisest use of that competence in the service of the institution's goals and responsibilities.
4. As recounted by George Thayer, *The War Business* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1969), p. 34n.
5. Mort Walker, *Beetle Bailey* (King Features, February 24, 1975).
6. Lewis Mumford, *The Urban Prospect* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1969), p. 246.
7. Arnold Rosenfeld, "How Newspapers Alienate Their Readers," *Washington Post* (April 8, 1979), p. D1.
8. Charles Moskos, "Extract to Testimony," *Army* (April 1979), p. 9.
9. Martin Blumenson, "A Glowing Tribute Full of Nostalgia," Review of *Hell on Wheels: The 2nd Armored Division*, *Army* (June 1978), pp. 72-73.
10. Erica Jong, *Fear of Flying* (New York: New American Library, 1975), p. 225.

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## **MODERNISM vs. PRE-MODERNISM: THE NEED TO RETHINK THE BASIS OF MILITARY ORGANIZATIONAL FORMS**

**Richard A. Gabriel**

### **ABSTRACT**

Organizational forms are in general function specific in that one form is not always appropriate to all functions. Especially so with regard to military organizations; more especially with regard to *ground* oriented military structures. In the United States, there has been a strong tendency to borrow organizational forms that have proven highly successful and functional in the economic sphere and to transport them along with their values, ethics, ethos and behavioral modes into the military. The hope was that the success of entrepreneurial organizations in the economic/social sphere could produce similar functional successes in the military sphere. The hypothesis here is simply that such a transfer is inappropriate, that it has been a failure, that there is a need to develop or rediscover alternative organizational forms appropriate to the military structure and, finally, to socialize members of this organizational form to its ethics, values, ethos and behaviors in a rather specific manner. Looking to

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the 1980s, successful military organizations paradoxically must be rediscovered rather than developed.

The US Army's newest operations manual, FM 100-5, states that the Army's mission is "to win the land battle—to fight and win in battles, large and small, against whatever foe, wherever we may be sent to war." Can the Army do its job if called upon to fight? The following facts suggest a negative response:

Thirty-eight percent of the Army's troops are released from service after less than three years for "mental, moral or physical reasons."<sup>1</sup>

Almost 40 percent of the troops are working in areas other than those for which they are trained.<sup>2</sup>

Rates of drug use by troops of heroin, cocaine, and angel dust may be higher than the 35 percent use rate in Vietnam.<sup>3</sup>

The morale of many units is at rock bottom because of poor living conditions for the troops and their families, especially in Europe.<sup>4</sup>

There are continuing racial problems in an Army which is 30 percent black and recruits blacks at a rate three times higher than their proportion in population.<sup>5</sup>

Fifty-nine percent of the Army's new recruits fall into category 3B or lower.<sup>6</sup>

Many units cannot perform well even in simulated combat exercises, at times placing dead last behind all other NATO armies.<sup>7</sup>

The officer corps is of questionable quality, remote from the troops, concerned with personal careers, and top-heavy with its own brass.<sup>8</sup>

The rotation system is overtly destructive of unit cohesion and effectiveness.

How did the Army arrive at its present state? Is the present "appalling state of readiness" only a recent phenomenon? Is the low quality of soldiers and officers something new? One can state unequivocally that the questionable quality of the American Army and

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some of its more severe disabilities are most certainly not post-Vietnam phenomena that can be blamed on cutbacks in equipment, budget, or, indeed, the introduction of the all-volunteer army. Even a cursory examination of the Army's performance and behavior demonstrates rather clearly that serious deficiencies were already evident during that conflict:

Over 1,000 officers and NCOs, what are termed critical leadership elements, were assassinated—fragged—by their men.

The rate of combat refusals—mutinies, refusals to engage the enemy in combat—were higher than in any other American conflict.

The ability of troops to fight was further impaired by heavy rates of hard drug use. According to the US Army official figures, close to 28.5 percent of the troops in country used hard drugs—heroin, cocaine, etc.<sup>9</sup>

The quality of the officer corps, already low, began to decline further to the point where, even by the Army's own requirements, many men were commissioned who should have never been officers. The Calley case is but one case in point.<sup>10</sup>

Officers and men at all levels, including the general officer level, participated in the giving and receiving of fraudulent awards. Indeed, one can plot a scissors curve in which the number of awards for bravery rises as the actual number of combat contacts declines.<sup>11</sup>

The point of the analysis is simple enough: current problems facing the Army are not rooted entirely in the post-Vietnam experience.

Although many of the problems first surfaced during the Vietnam war, the war did not cause the problems to the extent that it provided an arena in which they could emerge. They had taken root long before Vietnam, and they became pronounced when the Army allowed the fashionable ethos of the businessman, the marketplace, and the corporation to replace its traditional sense of ethics and responsibility. As a result, we began to hear admonitions not about leadership but about "management," not about displaying courage in combat but about "managing resources," and not about young officers expected to become leaders but about "middle-tier managers." These buzzwords reflect the deeper absorption of the entrepreneurial ethos

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that replaced the Army's traditional base of military ethics—moral responsibility and leadership skills forged in combat. When it lost its ethical moorings, the Army began to produce officers and troops of questionable quality.

This paper suggests that, in its last combat test, the American Army began to come apart at the small unit level. Its level of combat cohesion was low and its performance in combat suffered accordingly. And, many of the same conditions continue today in the peacetime Army. If these conditions contributed to the low level of combat cohesion and military effectiveness in Vietnam, one suspects that they will again prevail if American troops are committed to action without some fundamental changes in the existing military structure.

### **The Confusion of Organizational Forms**

The Army has unquestionably adopted the organizational forms, methods, and jargon of the modern business corporation. Adoption of these organizational forms and practices on the grounds of efficiency and cost effectiveness results from confusing the imperative forms of military organizations and business enterprises. In other words, the organizational imperatives of an effective military structure are categorically different from the imperatives of an entrepreneurial organization. The tasks performed by military organizations differ from the tasks performed by business organizations, and the resources necessary to perform military tasks depend on incentives beyond the material pursuit of profit, status, and production. Therefore, the managerial forms and techniques so effective in operating business organizations are largely inappropriate for the formation and conduct of cohesive and effective battle groups.

One should note that this analysis applies primarily to "battle groups"—small units organized for performing ground combat operations. Paradoxically, entrepreneurial models applied to such military organizations as the Air Force and, to a lesser extent, the Navy, apparently worked quite well. One reason for this distinction may be that Air Force personnel really do not engage in combat as a group. They are engaged primarily in managing equipment so that one man, the pilot, can perform his mission. There is no need for cohesion in one- or two-man aircrews. Naval crews likewise need few strong personal bonds since aircraft or ships automatically put

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everyone in the same situation. Furthermore, fixed command lines automatically limit the flow of information and the resulting decisions. Finally, there is no place to run, except by command, to retreat or surrender. In a ground unit, such as a platoon, 42 individual "systems" receive different amounts and qualities of information, and the "systems" decide the course of action to take. Command presence is either absent or unclear. Thus, ground combat appears categorically different in terms of the organizational and psychological requirements necessary for small units to cohere and perform their missions.

The problem of achieving combat effectiveness is only marginally rooted in material concerns, and it is not wholly rooted in the acquisition of military techniques. It is, fundamentally, a matter of human psychology. How do we prepare men to stand and fight—to risk their lives—under the terrifying stress of modern combat? What makes men stay together and function effectively in a group when logic impels them to flee?

Several major research efforts have focused on the problem of cohesion in military units subjected to combat stress. The most definitive work is probably the outstanding study of the German Army by Shills and Janowitz.<sup>12</sup> These scholars sought to identify, through a series of indepth interviews, the factors that contributed to unit cohesion in the German Army during World War II. They found that German units held together under extremely severe combat stress largely because of loyalties generated and sustained by primary groups. German soldiers, NCOs, and officers comprised a supporting web of strong *personal* relationships generated by combat experiences. Soldiers came to feel a responsibility born of mutual risk and hardship in their relationships with peers and superiors. They felt that their superiors were genuinely concerned for their welfare and were prepared to expose themselves to the same risks as the troops. In this process, the primary group—the social unit of strongest attitudinal attachment—was the foremost generator of mutually supporting relationships. The group per se became more than the sum of its parts and group attachment was truly corporative in nature for individuals within it. Personal relationships with individuals and the group were rooted in something stronger than entrepreneurial utility.

Equally interesting was the finding that German soldiers were motivated by ideological concerns only to a very small degree. This does not suggest that linkages with the larger society were nonexis-

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tent. However, the findings raise serious questions concerning the notion that soldiers can be continually motivated by ideology while they are subject to combat stress. Indeed, all major works on cohesion in combat conclude that ideology plays only a minimum role.

In his study, *Men Against Fire*, S. L. A. Marshall anticipated the findings of Shills and Janowitz.<sup>13</sup> Marshall studied the American Army in World War II and concluded that combat cohesion and motivation were qualities generated by personal attachments to peers within combat units. Samuel Stouffer produced the same findings in *The American Soldier*, a more comprehensive study of the American military man in the same war.<sup>14</sup> More recently, John Keegan, in *Face of Battle*, made a detailed study of the reasons that men remain together in battle despite terrible stress.<sup>15</sup> He focused on three famous English battles—Agincourt, Waterloo, and the Somme—and, in all three, he found that cohesion rested on the hardships, risks, and suffering shared alike by officers, NCOs, and common soldiers. In other words, the small unit becomes the focus of intense personal, almost "priestlike" attachments for which individuals perform the most conspicuous acts of bravery. Alan Lloyd, in *War in the Trenches*, comes to the same conclusion about British forces in World War I,<sup>16</sup> and Samuel Rolbant, in *The Israeli Soldier*, also finds military cohesion and motivation rooted in small, intense personal attachments.<sup>17</sup>

Past research demonstrates that the forces of ideology and entrepreneurial utility simply do not appear as major motivating forces in developing and maintaining unit cohesion in combat. And these findings appear rather valid cross-culturally in the British, German, American, and Israeli armies. They also appear to hold trans-historically in all kinds of battles, regardless of technology and the power of weaponry. The evidence suggests that cohesion stems from strong personal loyalties to small groups developed through, and sustained by, feelings that *all* participants are united by similar hardships, risks, fear, and the understanding that their leaders will endure similar conditions. In this sense, such attachments are "premodern" because they are rooted in the "social action" of the group and not in the "rational action" of the Weberian bureaucracy. To the extent that such forces are basic motivating factors in combat groups, they find significant support in "premodern" organizational structures and only minimum support in the "rational" organizational structures of business management systems.

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The underlying proposition in this analysis is that the degree of cohesion within a military structure is largely a result of "primary group loyalty." And cohesion, in turn, relates to combat effectiveness. In other words, cohesion stems from an overt and developed sense of community rooted in common experiences shared by both officers and troops. A loss of cohesion along traditional lines closely relates to the transformation of the military from a corporative bureaucratic structure into a largely *entrepreneurial* structure. To insure cohesive combat units, the Army must affirm the values of corporative, quasi-monastic premodern institutions rather than values based on the entrepreneurial ethos.<sup>18</sup> How, then, do entrepreneurial institutions differ from corporative institutions, and what makes military institutions so markedly different from the business corporation that has served so often as a model for their organizational development?

### **Two Models**

One of the most obvious differences between the two types of bureaucracy relates to the doctrine of rationality. For example, the doctrine of economic rationality requires that entrepreneurial bureaucracies must be patently rational in the sense that norms and values have worth only in terms of the "products" produced by the organization. Corporative bureaucracies, on the other hand, often develop "arational" operating procedures and norms in the sense that they are valued for themselves rather than for the "contribution" they make to the product. Thus, the role of codes, medals, and parades in the military or the ritual and ceremony of the monastery are valued for themselves. When traditions operate in entrepreneurial bureaucracies, they must continually be justified as demonstrably functional in the rational sense; in corporative insitutions, traditions have an independent value.

Entrepreneurial bureaucracies classically stress the ethics of self-interest, both in an organizational and individual sense, and rely upon the latter to motivate individuals to desired modes of behavior. In contrast, corporative bureaucracies stress an ethic of community interest. Accordingly, individuals accept employment in an entrepreneurial bureaucracy to satisfy perceived self-interests usually defined in the context of material requirements. To the extent that corporative bureaucracies stress "self-interest" at all, they suggest that individuals can satisfy such interests only by serving the community.

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Thus, an ethic of community obligation or service supplants the illiberal doctrine of individual laissez faire.

The entrepreneurial bureaucracy stresses the attainment of rewards defined largely in material terms and, therefore, extends the "logic of profit" to include organizational norms that stimulate individual advancement and initiative. This is the most marked distinction between entrepreneurial and corporative institutions. Corporative institutions have a clear tendency to define rewards in psychic and ritualistic terms expressed as recognition of contributions by the individual to the community of which he is a member. The recognition itself is the reward. Thus, the role of psychic and ritualistic rewards tends to be much greater in corporative than in entrepreneurial bureaucracies.

An examination of both models reveals still another important difference. Corporative institutions rely much more heavily on "higher code" justifications for developing organizational norms and a compelling individual behavior, but entrepreneurial bureaucracies rely heavily on "immediate" rewards institutionalized in terms of the "logic of profit." The stress on higher code justifications leads corporative bureaucracies to place major emphasis on "values" rather than "interests" as motivating forces of individual behavior. Of course, these institutions expect that values, defined primarily in nonmaterial terms, will become internalized and thus will compel acceptable behavior. Clearly, corporative bureaucracies expect individuals to behave in a manner consistent with accepted values, but entrepreneurs regard values as highly dysfunctional if they do not serve material self-interests.

Another point of comparison between entrepreneurial and corporative bureaucracies concerns the means of compelling acceptable behavior. In entrepreneurial structures, the means of compelling conformity are immediately available and operative, but, in corporative structures, such means are usually remote and slowly operative. Thus, in an entrepreneurial bureaucracy, a superior can usually dismiss a subordinate on the spot, deny a promotion, or withhold a raise. In corporative structures, these powers are not so clearly localized but are sometimes diffused throughout the entire community. Indeed, corporative bureaucracies require considerably less formal, rapid mechanisms than entrepreneurial bureaucracies for en-

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forcing conformity simply because they internalize their motivational incentives.

In general terms, the modern entrepreneurial bureaucracy develops administrative ideologies that are basically secular in nature and rooted in the theories and practices of economic interchange. Such ideologies tend to stress materially defined self-interest as the primary motivating mechanisms for both the organization and the individual. And it subordinates corporative values to concepts of "self-interest" and "profit" in an effort to develop a calculus for evaluating the "rationality" of the organization. Corporative bureaucracies, on the other hand, develop administrative ideologies patently communal in nature. They stress community obligations, norms of service, higher code justifications, and internalized values subjectively defined in terms of psychic and ritualistic rewards as primary means of defining and motivating organizational and individual behavior. Obviously, these two models are very different in terms of the requirement they level on their respective members concerning acceptable behavior.

The difficulty arises when an organization that depends on corporate values for its effectiveness begins, however gradually, to emulate the practices of an entrepreneurial bureaucracy. This problem began in Vietnam and continues today. The American Army operates on the basis of patently entrepreneurial practices and institutional forms. And perpetuation of these forms and practices has eroded the corporative bonds so crucial in building and sustaining primary group ties within combat units. Thus, one can raise serious questions about the ability of American units to fight effectively in the event of a war.

As mentioned earlier, the problem of unit cohesion is a matter of human psychology rather than technical competency. Considered in this framework, the following entrepreneurial practices have corroded the combat effectiveness of American Army forces:

- A rotation system in which units are not rotated but only individuals. Via the DEROS system, everyone is rotating in and out of units so that there is no real time to form and stabilize primary group bonds among the troops.
- An officer corps, the primary leadership element at the small unit, that rotates even faster than the troops. In Fiscal Year

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1978, 80 percent of the Army moved from one station to another.<sup>19</sup> Without stable leadership elements, cohesion at the small combat unit is impossible.

- An officer corps addicted to "ticket-punching." Seeing that the system rewards the officer in motion, more officers try to stay in motion. Troops become not moral charges, but tools—management resources—to be used in furthering one's own career.
- A promotion policy of up or out which no longer makes it possible to stabilize lower level combat leaders over long periods of time. We have no equivalent of the career captain or major. As a result, combat expertise is often lost.<sup>20</sup> One notes the post-RVN RIF of young officers struck at precisely these types of officers.
- A readiness system that simply does not evaluate readiness but rewards officers whose reports indicate readiness.
- Finally, the lack of a code of ethics or honor and means of enforcing it so that there is no behavioral counterweight to going along with the system. Ethical failures in RVN and today are not the result of evil men as much as the failure to perceive a realistic alternative to acquiescing in the system's imperatives.<sup>21</sup>

The point of the analysis is simply that the requirements of combat and the institutional forms needed to generate intense primary group loyalties among members of battle units are categorically different from the institutional forms needed in modern managerial corporations. To confuse the two and to use the instrumentalities of the latter in an effort to produce effective combat units is a critical mistake guaranteed to produce disaster on the battlefield. The Army needs to generate and use forms and values appropriate to the corporative institution—the church, the monastery, and other "premodern" organizations. Central to this use is the realization that motivational factors for the entrepreneurial—high salary, fringe benefits, etc.—do not appear very important to the career soldier. More important is the psychological feeling of being different, of being a member of community, and of having, as Malcolm Muggeridge once stated, "respect in the mouths of a chosen few."

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### **Rediscovering Organizational Forms**

Can a modern technological army drawn from a complex, differentiated society with highly articulated social values develop premodern organizational structures? Or is the pull of the larger society so great that military structures at all levels have no alternative but to conform to the larger societal values and organizational forms? Although the answer is far from clear, one might suggest that premodern structures and values are possible if the Army can develop an adequate process of deliberate, overt socialization of its members. How could it structure such a process?

Apparently, the American Army has not really explored pragmatic or even theoretical mechanisms needed to socialize a young soldier into the military environment. A frequent argument is that soldiers obtainable at the enlisted levels are not motivated; they tend to come from lower elements of society; and they do not share traditional values of discipline and self-sacrifice. Even worse, they tend to reflect the values of the liberal, democratic, success-oriented capitalistic society. Consequently, they are poor raw material to develop into soldiers. The writer suggests that this is a somewhat spurious argument. The history of military forces at least from the time of the Romans shows that soldiers at the enlisted level have always been drawn from the most marginal elements of their societies. Whether they were marginal men from proto-urban Roman societies, peasants forced off the land in Ireland, or immigrants in the regiments of the early American cavalry, the raw material of armies has not fundamentally changed. Thus, in the historical context, the argument that modern society provides poor raw material is not really a viable argument. Armies have always dealt with socially marginal enlisted men and, to some extent, members of the officer corps. This suggests that military men, as socially marginal members of society, have rarely, if ever, depended upon the larger social orders for guidance in terms of values.

History records numerous instances in which armies cohered long after their host societies had decayed or had abandoned them. For example, Roman legions persisted and cohered in England for 365 years, a longer period than the white man has been in North America. Other units, such as the Waffen SS, persisted and cohered long after their own host societies had been pounded into dust. On the other hand, French Army units in Indochina simply did not have

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the overt support of their societies. Indeed, the units airdropped at Dien Bien Phu during the siege knew well in advance that the game was a failure, but they still cohered.<sup>22</sup> Evidently, cohesion and combat effectiveness are not synonymous with victory or defeat. The Waffen SS was highly cohesive, but it was not victorious. The French forces at Dien Bien Phu were highly cohesive, but they were not victorious. One obviously prefers to win rather than lose, but an army's fighting qualities do not hinge on victory or defeat. Nevertheless, armies throughout history have simply not relied upon their host societies for values or for behavioral guidelines in welding units into effective fighting forces.

Of course, one can raise a counterargument that earlier societies were either patently aristocratic or monarchial and that modern capitalistic democracies will not tolerate a lack of continuity between the values of the larger society and military units. A lack of continuity would pose the risk of a *staat im state*. This argument also appears to be spurious. History is replete with examples of military organizations whose values differed from their larger societies and whose practices were patently authoritarian, but they functioned in essentially liberal and open democratic societies. One need look only at England. With the rise of the Industrial Revolution, the English social order became more and more democratic, mobile, and liberal, but the military organization remained essentially aristocratic and authoritarian in its practices. The same is true of France and, above all, Israel, which maintains an authoritarian military force at least in its internal organization. Yet the Israeli Army does not represent a threat to the life of the social order. The same was true in the American Army, at least until the rise of Robert McNamara in 1962 and the final triumph of managerial principles over traditional practices.

The important point is that soldiers have always been marginal, that military organizations have never relied on their larger societies for their values, and that authoritarian military structures and liberal democratic societies have not experienced fundamental tensions. What, then, is the problem in developing an effective military force? The problem is cohesion—to get men to stand under the terrifying stress of the modern battlefield. And yet the world of business—the world of economic models—says nothing about the reasons that men fight or cohere under the horrifying conditions of battle.

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The problem can be resolved through adequate socialization. It is the same problem faced by the Romans, the French, and the British—how to make good soldiers of men with marginal standards, values, and intellectual abilities. How can the US Army bring men with marginal skills and values that are somewhat antithetical to its values into the military tribe? How can it socialize them to the tribe? How can it make good soldiers of them?

### **Socializing the Soldier**

In examining the problem of socialization, one must place the onus where it belongs—on the military structure itself. The military must be able to take human raw material, change it, mold it, and develop soldiers who will stand even until death. What, then, do we mean by socialization? All too often, scholars view socialization primarily as a voluntary process. The writer submits that it is not a voluntary process at all. The military must socialize young soldiers not only to new military values but also away from old societal values. Any mechanism of socialization that allows equal exposure to both sets of values is doomed because the soldiers enter service already biased by the values of the larger society. Soldiers must learn to live in an environment that, to some extent, isolates or at least minimizes their exposure to old values and maximizes their exposure to new values required in performing military tasks. The first problem is to find a mechanism that will achieve this purpose. How can this be done?

As implied above, *isolation* is a primary element of socialization. That is, the individual must see himself as a part of some entity, such as a regiment, division, or squad. Under Frederick the Great, Germany became a first-rate military power because it adopted reforms that led to the "institutionalization of excellence." A major change under Frederick the Great was to assign troops together in common billets of six to a room. The men ate together, slept together, and foraged for their rations together. Is it any wonder that they cared about one another when they stood together in combat? There must be some unit of stability, some unit of attachment—the platoon, the company, the regiment, the division. Without such entities, the individual has nothing to identify with. *Symbols and myths* must also be a part of the socializing process. Many times "problems" arise in the way people think because they do not always think logically. Logic is not so much a way of thinking as it is a way of talking about thinking. People like to think of themselves as rational and they like to think that

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their attachments to things and other people are rational. Thinking of this sort is perhaps not rational at all, but merely emotive. Why do soldiers feel a tingling sensation down their backs when the flag is raised or when they attend a ceremony for a dead comrade? Something pulls at the individual's emotions. If one assumes that people are at least as emotive as they are rational, then the socializing process should make some appeal to the emotional side of the personality. The myths of heroes, the symbols of the military order—flags, ceremonies, presentation of medals, and awards—can make such appeals. Use of these and other symbols recognizes that men join groups not so much to find rational succor as to find emotional identity, and that emotional attachments are sources of enormous strength. In many instances, military training overlooks emotion as a mechanism of socialization and fails to give sufficient attention to symbols and myths in support of the socialization processes.

Traditions are important elements of socialization. It matters not whether traditions are true or false; most traditions begin as truth and become false through the distortions of time. But traditions provide modern man a sense of continuity with his past. To recapture the myths of time gives one a sense of place or, in the words of a university dean, "You must understand, we as a Benedictine community have forever to change. We think in terms of centuries." If a person defines himself as not purely rational but often emotive, it makes sense to view his life in terms of the past that give it birth and the future to be lived. The use of tradition is important in the sense that it provides the framework for the individual to define himself.

To become a part of the tribe, a soldier must feel a *sense of common fate* with his peers. He must understand that his well-being, his comfort, his privileges, and ultimately, his life rest not only on his performance but on the performance of his comrades. If he fails at his task, he fails not only himself but risks the lives of his comrades. Company punishment, a former tradition in the American Army, was a strong factor in building a sense of common fate among the troops. For example, a young officer quickly became aware that the whole company went without a weekend pass when his platoon or one man in his platoon failed inspection. When this happened, the man who failed received all kinds of additional help and advice from his own men! More important, the episode impressed upon all members of the company the importance of sticking together. They would live together and they would die together. With the adoption of such

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business techniques as the individual rotation and assignment system, men are assigned to jobs rather than units, and a sense of common fate is impossible. Units came apart in Vietnam because they shared no sense of common fate. The officers did not share a common fate with their men: they served in combat tours for six months, and the troops served for twelve. Even the most marginal troops could perceive that they did not share a common fate.

In addition, the socializing process must provide a *sense of certainty*. One of the characteristics of marginal men is that they rarely know what they want and what is required of them. Interestingly, men who have studied totalitarian movements find that the hitchhikers on the tide of history, those who rushed, in the early days, to the Nazi Party, the Communist Party, and the Fascist Party, were marginal men with no stake in society. Modern man needs a sense of community. The recent events in Guyana definitely address this point. But one can consider other instances—for example, the ability of the media to create certain fashions almost overnight. These examples show the susceptibility of a population in search of community and certainty. Therefore, the system must present itself as an alternative to normal social values. It must present itself as a way of life and not merely as another job. General Maxwell Taylor used to say that "the army is not for everybody; it's like a church." There is certainly a sense in which the soldier must be aware that he is joining a quasi-monastic society that will not give him the privileges of the larger society, but, in its bosom, he can be sure of a sense of comfort and identification that he does not find in the larger society.

One element rarely addressed in the process of socialization is the element of *fear* marshalled behind consistency. The object is to present the soldier with limited options. The Army recruits people and later tells them to leave if they dislike military life, and, in its training programs, it carefully explains that the penalty for using drugs is marginal. It invites them to become members of its professional system and then encourages them to assert their rights in the system. But when they leave the system, become involved in drug abuse, or otherwise fail to meet established standards, it wonders why they leave the system or why they cannot be socialized to acceptable military behavior. To socialize people into a monastic or military organization, professional members of the organization must limit individual options, specify rules of the game, and consistently enforce

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the rules. Otherwise, a self-fulfilling philosophy allows people to leave the organization because they *can* leave, take drugs because they *can* take drugs, and short officers because they *can* short officers. Genuine socialization involves an element of fear and the certainty that soldiers will be penalized when they violate established standards of behavior. Every soldier must know the rules and understand the specific penalties for breaking the rules. If a community does not enforce its rules or if it enforces them inconsistently, it loses credibility in the eyes of its members.

Socialization requires stability of units and command elements over extended periods. Officers and noncommissioned officers must remain with their men, not for six or twelve months, but for longer periods. How can soldiers identify with the 35th Replacement Battalion at Ft. Hood, Texas, when they serve with the battalion for only 16 weeks between assignments. Units must be stabilized, and officers and troops must view their units as primary assignments. If they rotate out for short periods, they must ultimately return to their primary units. Soldiers must feel that they belong to something, and stable military units, regiments, or divisions can serve as anchors around which the soldiers can organize their lives.

There is also the need for *martyrs* in the socializing process. On the football field the injured quarterback is the martyr, and in the monastery it is the aged monk carried on the shoulders of his brethren to his grave. In battle, it is the death of a soldier and above all, the death of the soldier's officers. An army whose officers do not share the burden of death will almost always be an army that does not fight well. Levels of unit cohesion are normally high when officers share high percentages of deaths. For example, 33 percent of the German aristocracy was killed in action during World War II. The aristocracy comprised less than 3.5 percent of the officer corps, and it took approximately 7 percent of the casualties.<sup>23</sup> In Vietnam, the American officer corps constituted approximately 15 percent of the Army's total strength, and it took approximately 7 percent of the Army's casualties. Which army was more cohesive?<sup>24</sup> In war, there is a need for martyrs and a need for men to die. After all, such deaths are the stuff of tradition, myths, and emotions; therefore, it is important to die well. One might really question whether death in battle is the pinnacle of a successful military career. In terms of unit cohesion, there is a categorical difference between a unit's reaction to the death of an officer in front of his men, as is customary with Israeli officers, and the

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death of an officer in a villa or bar in a rear area of Vietnam. One death reinforces attachments to the units, but the other death has no positive effect.

Finally, honorable behavior must be reinforced by elite behavior. Nothing is accomplished when junior officers and noncommissioned officers live up to traditions and die well if military elites do not support them. One bad general is equal to a gaggle of bad platoon leaders in terms of its effect. When General Koster, Commandant of West Point, talked about duty, honor, and country and was later reduced in grade for complicity in the horror of My Lai, his behavior had a devastating effect on the morals of the Army officer corps. Perhaps the Army can tolerate a Lieutenant Calley to some extent, but it missed an excellent opportunity to demonstrate the consistency of its system by severely punishing this man for violating the basic laws of humanity. An older army would have brought him before his unit, cut his buttons, broke his saber, and publicly dismissed him from his unit. Despite the terrible cruelty of such action, it certainly would have driven home the lesson that the Army is serious about its standards and that every young officer should beware of lying, even in defense of his superiors.

In the final analysis, strong primary groups with recognizable values and traditions are crucial factors in combat cohesion. Men will fight and die neither for ideologies nor for economics. They will stand and fight for one very simple reason: fear that their peers will hold them in contempt. There is no place to hide from such ostracism.

### **Conclusions**

The directions of change are sufficiently clear to reverse the entrepreneurial thrust in the military. Some reforms might include establishment of a clear code of communal ethics; abandonment of the up-or-out policy; replacement of units rather than individuals; reduction in the number of staff schools and officers, especially generals; and creation of an independent Inspector General and, perhaps, honor courts based on the German model.

If the Army does not undertake some effort to strengthen organizational forms that contribute to the ability of men to stand together in combat, then all military training and techniques will amount to

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nothing. History is replete with examples of armies that fought well with poor equipment, but there are no examples of armies that fought well under poor leadership. Failure to realize the fact that technical expertise does not equal combat cohesion results in the ultimate penalty—defeat on the battlefield.

Military leaders cannot justify the argument that a volunteer army attracts only uncommitted and incapable individuals and that the values of the larger society do not support military values. In the final analysis, the mechanisms and responsibilities for socialization rest with the military tribe—the military monastery. If the military does not perform those tasks, it is futile to expect the larger society to do it.

## **ENDNOTES TO MODERNISM vs. PRE-MODERNISM: THE NEED TO RETHINK THE BASIS OF MILITARY ORGANIZATIONAL FORMS**

1. Richard Hunter, *America's Volunteers: A Report on the All-Volunteer Armed Forces* (Washington: Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense, 1978), p. 65.
2. Lieutenant General Robert G. Gard, USA, cited this figure in a paper presented at the IUG meeting in New York in 1977. According to the 1980 DOD Appropriations Hearings, the figure has risen to 46 percent.
3. Drug use rates are difficult to verify. During the 1980 DOD Appropriation Hearings, the following figures were offered: 20 percent of the troops self-reported using hashish at least five times a week; 4 percent used "dangerous drugs" at least as frequently; while 1/4 of all combat troops under the age of 21 are "problem drinkers." The figure cited is actually half that cited by drug counselors in the Berlin Brigade on a CBS Special Report in May 1979 entitled "An Appalling State of Readiness."
4. Richard A. Gabriel, "The Slow Dying of the American Army," *Gallery Magazine* (June 1979), p. 94.
5. Hunter, p. 38.

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6. The Beard Report, 1979, p. 76 (A report prepared by Congressman Robin Beard's office on the condition of the AVF).
7. Two years in succession, American tank units placed last among major NATO countries in the annual tank competition.
8. Richard A. Gabriel and Paul L. Savage, *Crisis in Command: Mismanagement in the Army* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1979), see Chapter 3.
9. Gabriel and Savage, *Crisis in Command*, pp. 43-44, 46, 47.
10. Even Calley's lawyer argued that, by the Army's own standards in effect prior to the Vietnam war, Calley would never have been permitted to become an officer.
11. William L. Hauser, *America's Army in Crisis* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), p. 175.
12. Edward A. Shills and Morris Janowitz, "Cohesion and Disintegration in the German Wehrmacht in World War II," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 12, 1948.
13. S. L. A. Marshall, *Men Against Fire* (New York: William Morrow, 1947).
14. Samuel Stouffer, *The American Soldier* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1949).
15. John Keegan, *The Face of Battle* (New York: Viking Press, 1976).
16. Alan Lloyd, *War in the Trenches* (New York: David McKay Co., 1977).
17. Samuel Rolbant, *The Israeli Soldier* (London: T. Yoseloff, 1970).
18. For a complete exposition of the differences between corporative and entrepreneurial models, see Richard A. Gabriel, "Acquiring New Values in Military Bureaucracies: A Preliminary Paradigm," *Journal of Political and Military Sociology*, Vol. 7, Spring 1979.
19. Gabriel and Savage, *Crisis in Command*, see Table 13.
20. Ibid., pp. 71-75.
21. Ibid., Chapter 7.

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22. For an analysis of the morale and cohesion of French units during the Indochina war, see Richard A. Gabriel, *Dien Bien Phu: A Case Study in the Failure of Tactical Intelligence* (US Army Intelligence School Archives, Ft. Huachuca, AZ, Winter 1978).
23. Gabriel and Savage, *Crisis in Command*, p. 13.
24. Ibid., pp. 63-70.

## 5.

# THE SIX-MILLION-DOLLAR G-3: ARMY PROFESSIONALISM IN THE COMPUTER AGE

John C. Binkley  
and  
Donald B. Vought

in all our military training . . . we invert the true order of thought—considering techniques first, tactics second, and strategy last.

(Liddell-Hart, *Thoughts of War*, 129)

Technology is the most apparent factor molding today's military professionalism. It was the technological revolution of the last half of the 19th century, combined with the industrial revolution and the advent of the mass army, that spawned modern military professionalism. New weapon systems, such as breech-loading rifles, increased the lethality of the battlefield to such an extent that traditional tactical techniques became obsolete. New transportation and

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communication capabilities, typified by the railroad, allowed for speedier deployment of larger forces over greater distances than ever before. And the mass armies of the 19th century brought a fundamental restructuring of the military's relationship with the parent social system. This combination of factors demanded new skills and knowledge that the career officer could acquire only through formal schooling within a new professional subculture.

The modern professional faces these same kinds of problems as he grapples with the changes wrought by rapid technological advances and shifting social values. The volunteer army is on the verge of making fundamental changes in the nature of American military professionalism on a scale approaching the magnitude of the technological revolution of the 19th century.

In an article published in 1978, the authors identified trends within the US Army and presented findings that have remained more or less unchallenged. The findings suggested a disturbing constellation of behaviors and attitudes that will affect the Army's capabilities into the 1990s.<sup>1</sup> They identified two conflicting but not necessarily antithetical schools concerning the Army's professional ethos. A "radical" school concerned only with the management of violence, and a "pragmatic" school concerned with the management of violence as well as broader questions of military utility and social role. Both schools were traced through their post-World War II development.<sup>2</sup>

In general terms, the period 1945 to about 1970 witnessed a gradual trend in favor of "pragmatic" training and education. This trend contravened US military traditions and resulted from the demands of superpowerdom and wider social representation stemming from requirements for a larger standing force. However, the "pragmatic" ethos was never universally accepted, either in the Army or in the American public's perceptions of what an army should be and do.

The frustrations of Vietnam brought these incompatible trends into open conflict. Throughout most of the period of massive involvement in Vietnam, the US Army, as well as the other armed services, operated in a "radical" mode but superficially incorporated "pragmatism" into its operational style. Failure in Vietnam led the Army as an institution to eschew its partially developed "pragmatic"

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tendencies and to blame these allegedly "nonmilitary" activities for the defeat in Southeast Asia. The American public had no experience with defeat and generally supported the defense establishment's new stance, which was, in essence, a turning inward with a somewhat petulant claim that unless you (the public) want something physically destroyed, you should not call on us because that is our only trick.

Concurrently with discrediting "pragmatism" and "radical" realignment, the Army incorporated managership into the new ethos. During the mid-1970s, it expanded its professionalism to encompass both the narrow "radical" focus and the managerial jargon and techniques of the business world. The authors suggested that the wedding of these seemingly incompatible philosophies will lead to an increasingly introverted and destructive army as its weaponry becomes more devastating and its uses are restricted to all-out high-technology war. The Army's utility as an instrument of policy will shrink in direct proportion to the successful inculcation of the new ethos since it has chosen the least probable type and locale for conflict (i.e., Central Europe against sophisticated Soviet forces) to justify its existence. In effect, the "Central European Battle" has become a virtual *raison d'être* for the US Army.

The authors used the term "civilization" to describe the contribution of managership to diminished Army utility as projected into the 1980s. By disregarding the essential differences between military service and a job with Company "X," managers in the Department of Defense and their fellows in the Army contribute to the increasing isolation of the armed forces within the larger society. Concurrently, they are narrowing the spectrum of conflict in which the Army can function and are developing an internal managerial elite. We suggested that these trends are not necessarily in the best interests of US military efficacy in the last quarter of the 20th century.

Following the 1978 article, we reexamined the nature of managership in the Army and now opine that it is at least a partial result of an organizational response to the problems arising from rapid incorporation of highly sophisticated technology. The Army's rapid and widespread adoption of technology, particularly electronic hardware, may have reached the point that human resources available in the 1980s will find it too sophisticated for efficient use. To establish this hypothesis we must examine the role of technology on the conceptualized modern battlefield.

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For this purpose, we omit any discussion of probable "types" of armed conflict that could involve the United States during the next 25 years. Similarly, we avoid direct reference to the dangers of an army preparing to fight only one type of war against one enemy in one small part of the world. These crucial considerations are beginning to reappear in in-house publications after half a decade as "non-subjects."

If we accept the Army's own definition of its principal task, the problem confronting US planners today is the same problem that has faced them since 1945—defense of Western Europe with numerically inferior forces. Traditionally, the United States has responded to conflicts with qualitative and/or quantitative differentials in equipment to offset unfavorable numerical and geographical factors. Since the mid-1970s, however, technological parity has denied those differentials to the United States. This extract from FM 100-5 attests that the Army recognizes this development:

... we must assume the enemy we face will possess weapons generally as effective as our own and we will calculate that he will have them in greater numbers than we will be able to employ, at least in the growing stages of the conflict. Because the lethality of modern weapons continues to increase sharply, we can expect very high losses to occur in short periods of time. Entire forces could be destroyed quickly if they are improperly employed.<sup>3</sup>

In Central Europe at least, this means that a US commander must destroy the enemy faster than the enemy can advance. Barring a dramatic technological breakthrough, the commander must employ his weapons more effectively than the opponent employs his weapons. Thus, information and communications become absolutely essential to a beleaguered US commander. A recent article by former Commander of the US Army Training and Doctrine Command, General William DePuy, shows that the military hierarchy is aware of these requirements:

What is required is a combination of streamlined operational and intelligence procedures supported by multiple access communication and distribution systems. Critical combat information must be moved in near-real-time intelligence based on correlation and fusion of that information as soon thereafter as possible.<sup>4</sup>

The requirements outlined by General DePuy are natural out-

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growths of weapons equality and numerical inferiority. Attempts to create the electronic or automated battlefield represent a major response to these requirements. General William Westmoreland provided an early expression of the electronic battlefield concept in a speech before the Association of the United States Army in 1969:

... I see an army built into and around an integrated area control system that exploits the advanced technology of communications, sensors, fire direction, and the required automatic data processing—a system that is sensitive to the dynamics of the ever-changing battlefield—a system that materially assists the tactical commander in making sound and timely decisions.<sup>5</sup>

### **Results of the Technological Explosion**

The results of this technological explosion have been difficult for the Army to comprehend and even more difficult for it to use effectively. Previously, the Air Force and the Navy presented images of *technology-intensive* organizations. The Army, on the other hand, presented the image of an infantry fighting on a distastefully dirty battlefield with almost anachronistic weapons. This image does not reflect the realities of the modern US Army. Today's Army is an *equipment-intensive* organization that provides .78 systems for every person in a combat division. And the ratio will probably increase to more than one system per person by 1985. We do not refer to rifles and bayonets as "systems" but to sophisticated transportation, communication, and weapons systems, all of which demand intensive training in use and maintenance.

This technological explosion has resulted in heavy dependence on technology, which presents a number of inherent weaknesses. These weaknesses can be grouped under four broad headings: information overload, reliability, psychological dependence, and human/system interface.

*Information Overload (IO).* Simply stated, IO occurs when a system inputs information in excess of its ability to process or absorb it. Although overload is normally associated with cybernetic structures, such as telephone exchanges, IO can also affect organizations by paralyzing their leaders. When IO occurs, the more information a system receives in excess of its ability to process it, the less the output of the system. In extreme cases, IO can result in zero output as the system experiences confusion or "breakdown."<sup>6</sup>

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In specific military terms of reference, the commander and his staff may be inundated with data and become victims of information overload just as readily as any other information system. The proliferation of information systems has made an excess of information available to the commanders at battalion level and above, particularly at division and corps levels. The speed at which battlefield decisions must be made exacerbates the problem and complicates the process of information cueing. We hasten to add that this glut of information is not a true embarrassment of riches since information redundancy accounts for much of the volume, but there are still gaps in the availability of required information.

*Psychological Dependence.* The rush to automation carries with it a risk that becomes more serious in direct proportion to the completeness of the transition. US commanders and staff officers are conditioned to employ, and to rely on, automation in carrying out their functions. The conditioning process, or training, does *not* develop intuitive skills, but it does foster *psychological dependence* on the automated systems. If information is not available from a system, a future officer may be inoperable; i.e., he may be unable to function without the information he has become conditioned to use. Of equal danger are the effects of degraded functions that provide the decisionmaker with inaccurate or incomplete information upon which to base his plans. Although this phenomenon is not new in command decisionmaking, the degree of dependence on the elaborate information systems is new and self-inflicted. We may well reach a point where the user becomes an adjunct to his information systems and devices designed to help a commander reach decisions make the decisions for him.

*Reliability.* As a result of the haste to "get with the program" of automation, system proliferation has produced extensive incompatibility; i.e., computers need additional translators to enable them to "talk" to each other. Without these expensive and sometimes fragile additions, less critical systems cannot be used to replace or augment more critical systems.

Today, 22 types of computers are in operation as proposed for the corps and below. All of them require different parts and specially trained maintenance personnel and all require vehicles (ground or air) to move them and generators to support them. Vehicles and generators require fuel and maintenance.

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Many of the existing systems were designed without consideration for an active electronic warfare (EW) environment. The computer itself is not especially susceptible to interception or jamming, but *communicating between computers (remote sites to user or echelon to echelon)* is susceptible. Jamming for even milliseconds can degrade a system that makes high-speed transmissions with a tolerance of 1 error in 1,000,000 bits. The dangers are obvious in an environment demanding continuous communication in its command control and fire support systems.

The problems of electromagnetic and thermal signature become more acute as electronic equipment proliferates. A technologically sophisticated enemy can readily locate and target headquarters bristling with electronic emitters. Remoting (locating the emitter some distance from the user) offers little help since additional communication is necessary to carry the information from the remote locations to the user and relocation time is increased.

Efficacy then produces a dilemma of heroic proportions. For the non-high-technology scenario (i.e., non-European locale, other than Soviet regular force opponents), much of the Army's sophisticated equipment is unnecessary or even counterproductive—not that this will prevent its use. On the other hand, the high technology opponent has the capability to degrade our functioning to unacceptable levels and thus partially negate its value.

*Human/System Interface.* The use of the term "interface" in discussing human beings is an indication of the extent to which computerese has permeated the society. The US Army is no exception. In the light of current trends, the Army will need 15,000 computer operators for battlefield systems (corps and below) by 1985 if force strengths remain unchanged. A combat division consists of approximately 15,000 people. Additionally, each Army division will require 90 more vehicles, and each corps will require 80 more vehicles to maintain current levels of mobility.

*Cost.* By claiming "cost effectiveness," the techno-managers of the defense establishment justify the seemingly helter-skelter race to compensate for the perceived shortages of personnel with more sophisticated equipment. The "bottom-line" in cost effectiveness is numbers of dollars and the "return on the investment"—phrases that were transferred from the board room to the operations center in the

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1970s. In presenting new systems to prospective military buyers who all too frequently perceive their own interests tied to acceptance, industry invariably portrays systems that are both economical and effective, but both characteristics are not always realized in practice. One solution for this undesirable situation is to develop a cadre of military personnel who are better informed and better able to identify the ancillary costs that frequently belie the initial economies (e.g., power sources, maintenance, transportation, etc.). The danger is that, in gaining the technical know-how to deal knowledgeably with industry, we may lose the judgmental skill to evaluate efficacy and, more important, to determine operational needs. Nothing is economical if it is not needed.

### **Personnel and Sophisticated Equipment**

How will the Army acquire and retain the trained or trainable personnel to evaluate and operate this vast electronic network? The civilian sector is experiencing difficulty in meeting its needs for computer operators/maintenance personnel at a time when the Army finds it difficult even to attract personnel. Today's Army maintains some of its more sophisticated equipment by *civilian contract*.<sup>8</sup> Is it prudent to assume these people will continue to function in time of war? We think not. The use of poorly trained and/or poorly motivated personnel will exacerbate all of the problems mentioned above. For example, an incorrectly adjusted line-of-sight antenna can lose the use of some of its channels, or an improperly rolled cable can degrade the transmission of information.

Electronic technology is not the only area where the Army might pause to consider whether its systems are becoming too complicated for human use. One indication is the inability of operators to use weapons at their designed effectiveness. Using the probability of first round hit (P.H.) and the range (R) as the ordinates in Figure 1, the line ED reflects the expected accuracy of a hypothetical weapon system and the line FA the actual accuracy based on field tests.

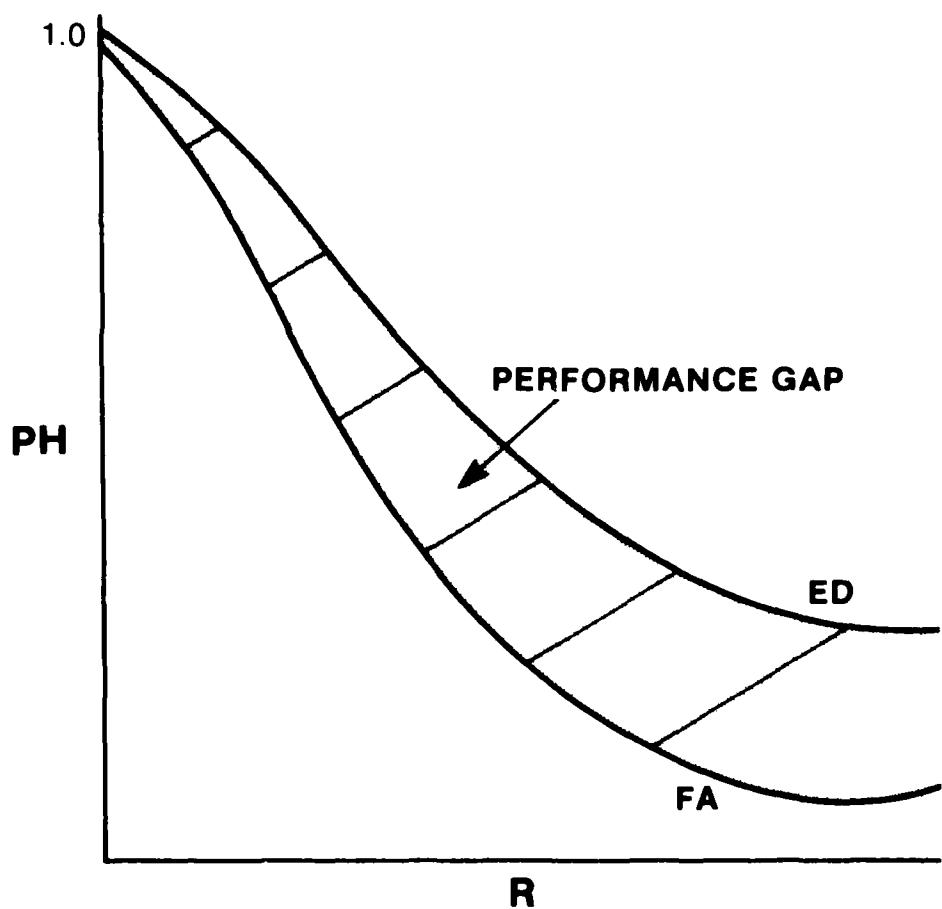
The difference represents a gap that might be bridged by training, but the gap might be beyond human ability under normal operating conditions. Not that qualified people cannot be found, but they can be found only through extensive aptitude testing, which requires longer periods and greater cost to identify gifted individuals. Although specifics vary from weapon system to weapon system, there

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are similarities in performance gaps in the firing of the LAW (light anti-tank weapon), the TOW, the Dragon, etc.<sup>9</sup> As complex systems interface with each other, one can logically assume that the size of the gap will increase. General William Depuy recognized this point in a 1977 speech:

... let's take the TACFIRE performance gap. If the training of artillery is 90% effective, if the ammunition is 90% reliable, if the

**Figure 1**



Source: TRADOC PAM 71-7

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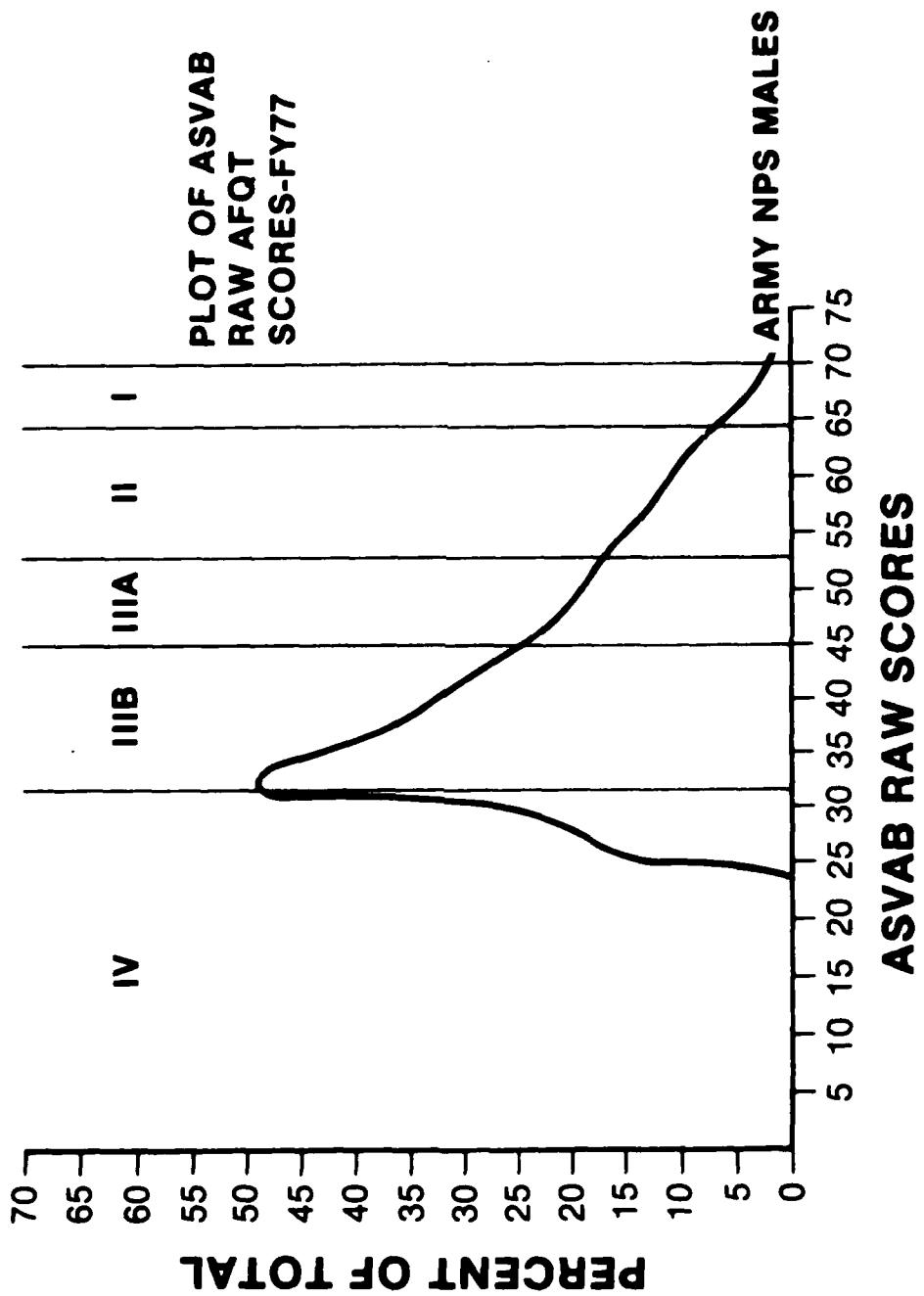
forward observers are 90% accurate, if the Ground Locator Laser Designator (GLLD) is 90% accurate, if the digital message device sending bursts over the FM radio gets through 90% of the time, if the maintenance of the Cannon Launched Guided Projectiles (CLGP) and the Battery Computer System (BCS) is 90%, and if the maintenance effectiveness of TACFIRE is 90%, and then you multiply them all together you have much less than 50% overall systems capability coming out the other end. And that's what we are working on now. We are analyzing systems that have many segments, each one of which presents problems in training, maintenance, and employment. When we pay billions of dollars for equipment and facilities with 100% capability, we would like to achieve at least 80% of it. But if we don't examine the entire system, we are going to end up with 10 or 20% effectiveness.<sup>10</sup>

This gap between the theoretical performance capabilities of a system and the ability of soldiers to use it relates at least to some degree to the trainability of the soldiers enlisting in the volunteer army.

Military performance may be judged in a variety of ways, but we suggest an important criterion is the ability to employ the weapons and support systems effectively. The problem facing the Army is that the present enlistee is less likely to have a high school diploma and more likely to score lower on intelligence tests than his counterpart of prevolunteer days. In a recent article in *Armed Forces and Society*, Moskos and Janowitz point out that, "at the enlisted level, educational qualifications have emerged as the best predictor of military performance."<sup>11</sup> A plot of ASVAB raw AFQT scores for Fiscal Year 1977 (Figure 2) is particularly revealing in the sense that it shows a large proportion of Category III-B and IV enlistees. The problem is exacerbated by low retention rates that constantly drain off skills and increase acquisition costs. If there is a single issue that may motivate the Army to call for the return of the draft, it is the inability of present enlistees to handle sophisticated equipment.

Although poor trainability clearly complicates the problems of technological reliance at the enlisted level, it also affects the ability of the officers to fulfill their supervisory roles. To use these complicated systems effectively in the existing environment, officer-supervisors must be as effectively trained in technical skills as the soldiers they supervise and some people may argue that, given the quality of present enlistees, supervisors may need even more technical skills. As a

**Figure 2**



Source: U.S. Army Training & Doctrine Command

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result the junior officer's job is rapidly becoming little more than a sum total of his subordinates' jobs.<sup>12</sup> One questions whether a junior officer facing the difficult task of adjusting to Army life will be able and willing to acquire these increasingly complex performance skills and concurrently develop higher cognitive skills, such as leadership and problem solving. Furthermore, the increasing demands of sophisticated technology will also erode the field grade officer's opportunity to develop cognitive skills.

Thus, reliance on sophisticated technology has created questions of costs and benefits of using such systems. On the one hand, the automated battlefield theoretically allows the Army to optimize its systems and create the potential for winning the central battle in Europe. Furthermore, such reliance is compatible with the US cultural style and with prevailing fiscal and manpower policies. On the other hand, automation creates a situation in which man himself may be gradually excluded from the military decisionmaking process because his humanity will not allow him to interface with the computers efficiently enough to use them fully. Since any situation that creates inefficiency cannot be tolerated, the only possible solution is to create an environment in which officers and enlisted personnel are physically and intellectually attuned to their machines. But the creation of professional soldiers who can interface with the computers to the required degree causes further problems of narrowness stemming from specialization.

### **Training and Education**

One manifestation of the ongoing struggle is the Army's frustration in the area of training and education. In examining this issue, we found that the Army is moving steadily toward a training model that virtually ignores education. One cannot assume simply that this is a result of a general trend toward reasserting "radical" skills although reassertion is a factor. Technological reliance also encourages the training fixation. The Director of the Army Training Study (ARTS) in 1978 succinctly stated this relationship:

Shrinking manpower will force recruitment of some less skilled soldiers in the future. To train these soldiers to achieve the requisite high levels of battlefield proficiency on more sophisticated equipment and weapons in a cost constrained environment, train-

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ing programs must be designed to teach tasks in a more effective and efficient manner.<sup>13</sup>

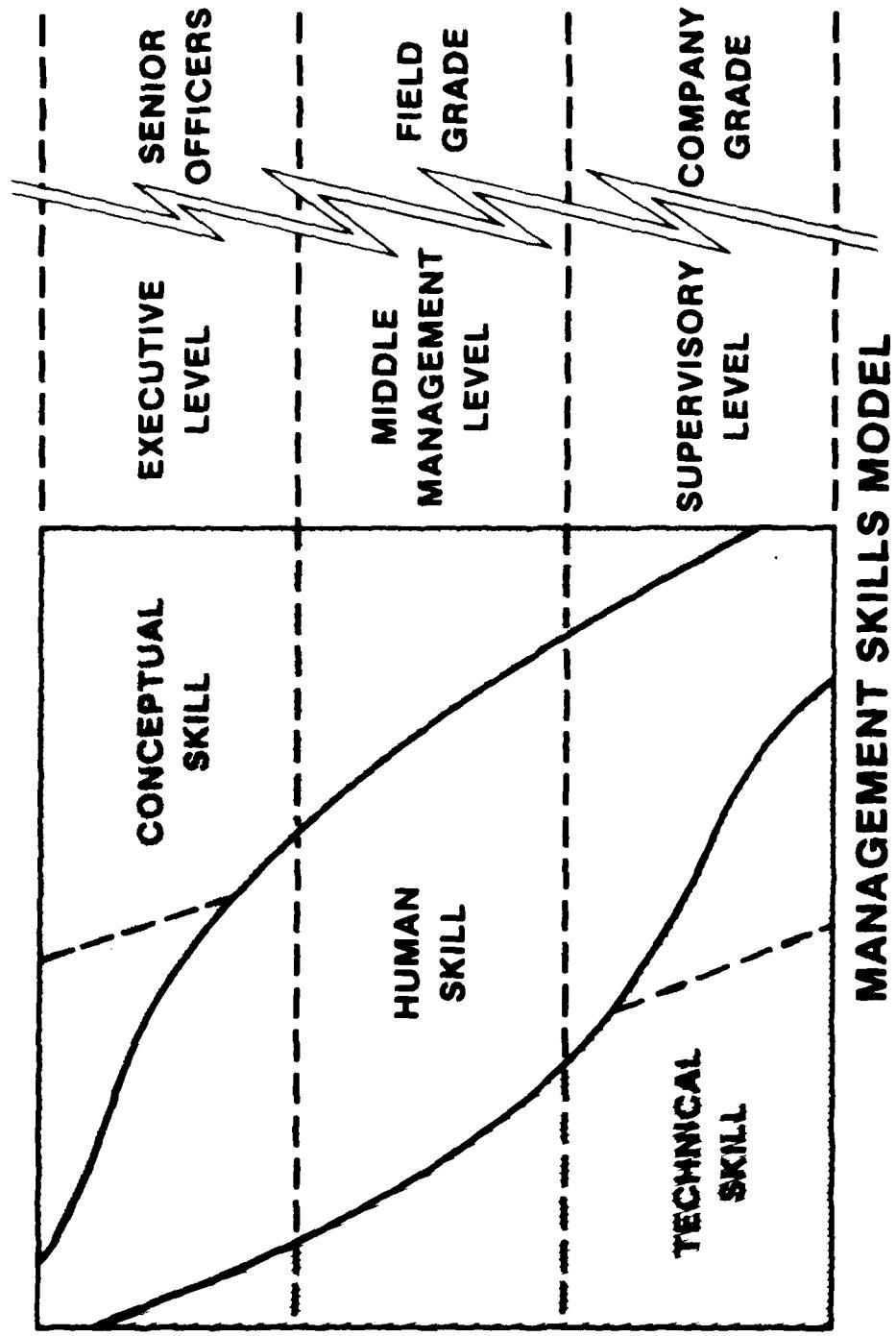
To fulfill this requirement, the Army has embraced the most modern and systematic means of training. New systems coming into the inventory are developed in tandem with their training packages. These packages are part of an effort known as skill performance aids (SPAS), which examines every system in terms of specific tasks that must be performed to use or maintain the system. The Army then produces a package of instructional aids that help the soldier to learn those tasks. This approach has also become the mainstay of the Army school system under the trade name, criterion reference instruction (CRI). As in the case of SPAS, CRI approaches a curriculum from a task orientation. Once learning objectives or tasks have been determined, people are subjected to continuous training until they achieve predetermined levels of proficiency.

Obviously, this systematic approach is a positive step in the light of problems outlined by the Army Training Study. But there are hidden dangers in wider application of this approach, especially when it is applied to the officer corps. Despite the apparent feeling by some senior officers that there are no fundamental differences between training and education, the point is moot. The Army's 1978 Review of Education and Training for Officers (RETO) noted certain differences, especially in the "objectives of the learning process." The RETO study specifically pointed out that

... training is a process in which the trainees are assisted in learning technical knowledge and skills so that they can become qualified as proficient in performing a task. Educating is the process of assisting a person in developing mentally or morally.<sup>14</sup>

This distinction is crucial. The higher cognitive skills, such as analysis and problem solving, are developed through the educating process. This does not suggest that training does not have a place in officer development. An officer needs to master certain specific military skills so that he can more effectively use the tools of his trade. With this in mind, the Army has advanced the notion that junior officers should concentrate on hard technical skills during their apprenticeship. The 1978 RETO study reflects this point in a graphic representation of an officer's career (Figure 3).

Figure 3

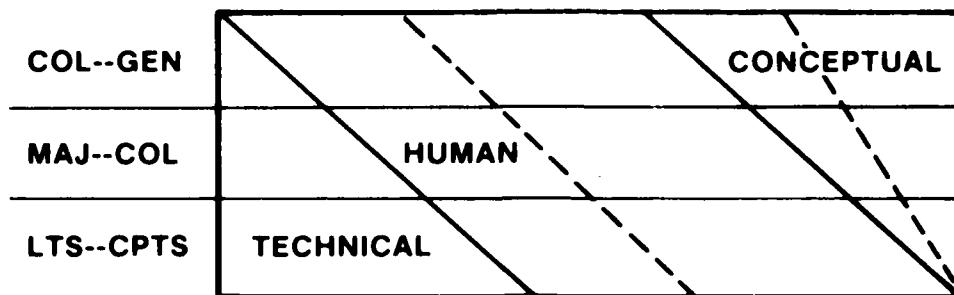


Source: RETO Vol. I, page III-10

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The following graph depicts a military application of Robert L. Katz's classic skill mix for organizational managers<sup>15</sup> (Figure 4).

Figure 4



Source: Robert L. Katz, "Skills of an Effective Administrator," Harvard Business Review (January-February 1955)

We suggest that the Katz skill mix will become skewed as indicated by dotted lines in Figure 4 because of the increased emphasis on training and technical proficiency. The general trend within the Army toward more technical training for officers since 1974 substantiates this hypothesis. One of the unwritten assumptions in the Army's structuring of officer skills is that the process will transform a technically oriented junior officer into an analytic field grade officer, but the Army never explains how the process will transform the officer. The RETO study implies that such a transformation will occur if the officer knows, at every level of his progression, exactly what is required of him. This is a logical but insufficient assumption. There is some question as to the usefulness of the same behaviorally oriented training model to help officers acquire higher cognitive skills.

As an offshoot of applying the training model, which emphasizes task identification, the Army has begun to identify tasks that relate to various officer grades and positions. It was, therefore, consistent for the RETO study to recommend that officers attend short training courses to prepare specifically for their next assignments. In this regard, the Army is following Air Force and Navy trends.<sup>16</sup>

An example of this trend is the pending formation of a special course of instruction called the Combined Arms and Service Staff School (CAS<sup>3</sup>). The CAS<sup>3</sup> was designed to meet a very real need at the

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mid-level in the Army education system. Currently, only 40 to 45 percent of the field grade officers have the opportunity to attend the ten-month course at the Command and General Staff College (CGSC) or its equivalent. There is no formal resident military schooling at the mid- or field grade level for the remaining 55 to 60 percent of the officers. Since their last formal schooling was the Advanced Course aimed at developing company commanders, this group of officers never received formal instruction in combined arms tactical doctrine or, perhaps more important, staff procedures. Many of these officers assigned to positions requiring those skills suffered recurring performance lags while they learned on the job.

Following the German General Staff model, only some 20 percent of the officer corps would take the ten-month course at Leavenworth, and the remainder would attend the eleven-week CAS<sup>3</sup> course.<sup>17</sup> The Chief of Staff of the Army recently decided that all officers at approximately their tenth to thirteenth year (when they normally would be promoted to major) would attend CAS<sup>3</sup>. Selection for attendance at CGSC would then proceed in much the same manner as in the past.

The purpose of CAS<sup>3</sup> is to give all field officers a common basic knowledge of staff procedures and tactical doctrine. In and of itself, this is a utilitarian purpose. The problem is that the very advantages inherent in that mission are potentially dysfunctional. Undoubtedly, if the course is successful, it will produce a group of officers who will react to professional stimuli in similar manners and this, in turn, will guarantee a degree of uniformity in operational techniques. Such operational uniformity was one of the purposes for establishing the general staffs of the 19th century. This method of achieving uniformity, however, degrades the other function of a staff officer, i.e., planning, which requires a broader appreciation of the environment around them. The former function demands high technical proficiency, but the latter demands conceptual thinking. Robert Katz considered this broadening as the basis for conceptualization:

Conceptual skill involves the ability to see the enterprise as a whole; it includes recognizing how the various functions of the organization depend on one another, and how changes in any one part affect all the others, and how it extends to visualize the relationship of the individual business to the industry, the community, and the political, social, and economic forces of the nation as a whole.<sup>18</sup>

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The import is obvious when one considers that the vast majority of field grade officers will not be assigned to tactical units.<sup>19</sup> This does not suggest that officer education and training are either/or situations, but emphasis on one to the exclusion of the other will surely be detrimental.

We suggest that with current policies the Army "can't get there from here." The current retirement and personnel systems contain imperatives to "succeed" by doing everything well and doing it all within a 20-25 year career. In-service training is becoming highly task specific. With the increasing pressures to manipulate hardware better than their soldiers, where will the future Army leaders gain their cognitive skills? Graduate civilian schooling is frequently offered as the solution, but, today, civilian schooling for Army personnel is confined largely to technical and managerial skills.<sup>20</sup>

As mentioned earlier, managership in the Army is making a major contribution to the new civilized ethos. Implicit in the analysis was the contribution to stress resulting from constant change (sometimes called "managerial fine tuning") and the imposition of business jargon on a body of existing professional terminology. Today, for example, reference is made to "wholesale" and "retail" logistics activities, "products" and "customers," "contracts" between organizations, and "management" rather than command or control. Among the Nation's managerial elite, the point of true interchangeability is not far distant. We approach the time when admirals, generals, general managers, and assorted business school functionaries can replace each other by merely changing clothes.

There is, however, an element of superficiality in the military's managerial veneer. In fact, management science has been accused of inherent shallowness. Peter Drucker states that:

... in the literature as well as in the work in progress—the emphasis is on the techniques rather than on decisions, on tools rather than on results, and above all, on efficiency of the part rather than on the performance of the whole.<sup>21</sup>

Drucker's analysis can be supported by routine observations. One frequently hears such statements in the business world as "25¢ worth of management is more valuable than a dollar's worth of production" and variations that extol the benefits of management. Although one might question the validity of these slogans, the

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mindsets behind the slogans are disturbing when they are applied to the military.

The following extract from a 1977 leadership study by the Army Administration Center confirms that the Army is not completely blind to the dangers lurking beneath the trend toward management *über alles* (above all):

In promoting increased efficiency (which is indeed desirable), the new tools of management science are extremely powerful—so much so that they are dangerous since their wrong or careless use can do serious damage. Presently, in some large organizations, management science has lost sight of its emphasis. In such situations—and in terms of an analogy—the management science dimension has placed emphasis on the hammer instead of on driving in the nail, and often completely loses sight of the object under construction. What has occurred is a gross misunderstanding of what "scientific" means. Scientific is not synonymous with quantification.

Management scientists are basically technical specialists. But managers can attain some of this expertise and apply it in their functioning if they appreciate that the value of management science techniques is to contribute available alternatives or choices between courses of action. They can gain this appreciation if they place their focus on understanding as opposed to formulae. In this regard, management science activities provide tools of analysis; they are means to an end and not ends in themselves. They are certainly not the panacea to ultimately optimize organizational functioning.<sup>22</sup>

We question whether recognition of the dangers can counterbalance the allure of "management" as the current "hot" area and its effects on the Army's social Darwinism. Considered in this framework, Officer X faces an interesting situation. Since he must constantly show success in every area where success is in vogue, i.e., can be "seen" (frequently called the "real world"), he develops centralizing and meddling tendencies. He cannot allow an inept subordinate to blemish his flawless image; therefore, as a true manager, he reduces the opportunities for discretionary action. He next shows his managerial skill by scheduling and accounting for his subordinates to the point of triviality. To do all of this, he must control every facet of his people's functioning from the center. The results are quite predictable. A 1978 study of captains in the Army's VII Corps in Europe

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revealed that lack of control over time or resources was a major irritant.<sup>23</sup> Navy and Air Force studies have surfaced similar findings from junior officers currently serving and recently separated. The following extract from an Army War College study of professionalism in 1970 shows that these trends have been building for some time:

A scenario that was repeatedly described in seminar sessions and narrative responses includes an ambitious, transitory commander—marginally skilled in the complexities of his duties—engulfed in producing statistical results, fearful of personal failure, too busy to talk with or listen to his subordinates, and determined to submit acceptably optimistic reports which reflect faultless completion of a variety of tasks at the expense of the sweat and frustration of his subordinates.<sup>24</sup>

One of the great tragedies of Vietnam was that the Army became obsessed by the notion spawned in business school that quantifiable data are the *only* indication of success and failure. Despite the negative aspects of this practice described in Douglas Kinnard's book, *The War Managers*, such statistical indicators have in fact proliferated in the peacetime Army.<sup>25</sup> Since the success or failure of an officer's career depends to a great extent on the type of data fed into the system, the potential ethical and psychological strain is evident.

With the exception of the obvious dysfunctions implied in the War College study, our concern centers on the long-term effects of the managerial concept on military thinking. A highly managed environment discourages development of initiative and cognitive skills. It produces *aparatchiks* who are just the opposite of the imaginative innovator sometimes called America's greatest military asset.<sup>26</sup> The Army may, in fact, be dissipating that asset through subordination of human beings to machines and overmanagement. Military forces are fundamentally different from commercial enterprises both in their purpose and in the motivations of their members. By inculcating a business ethos, defense managers are overlooking a crucial point: the United States does not dictate the parameters or mode for conflict; the opponent has an equal say in determining the when, where, how and how much of any contest. In the first analysis, an army that functions as a Sears Roebuck Company is effective only if the opponent chooses to function as a Montgomery Ward Company.

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### **CONCLUSION**

Technology has rendered our six-million-dollar G-3 a veritable bargain. A typical CGSC graduate (lieutenant colonel, serving as a division G-3 in Europe) represents at least \$50,000 in formal inservice training and education, not including precommission costs. The automated equipment *organic to a division* in Europe costs more than 364 million dollars with at least 50 million dollars involved in the G-3 function. In return for this investment, we have a technocrat who has become increasingly dependent on his electronic aids and his aids have become ever more subject to disruption in electronic warfare and malfunction caused by personnel shortcomings in operation and maintenance. His doctrine—the active defense from FM 100-5—calls for identifying the enemy's main thrust so that forces and fires can be concentrated at the critical point. He knows that a mistaken "reading" of the enemy's intentions will be tantamount to disaster because he must weaken less critical areas to produce the required force ratio at the critical point. On the modern battlefield against a technologically sophisticated enemy, he will have little time to recover from a false reading. We have thus placed our young warrior in an unenviable position since hesitancy or acting on inaccurate data could be fatal.

There is a touch of irony in the Army's techno-managerial whirl. First, the absence of any definition of Army professionalism raises the question as to whether one attempts to emulate the general or the general manager. Second, the devices designed to assist the commander are causing fundamental changes in the nature of command. Today's commander has been relegated increasingly to the role of computer programmer with only veto power over decisions made by his machines. When the machines reach their planned effectiveness, he may even lose that veto power because of the conditioning that underlies the Army's current training philosophy.

The American addiction to technological development and the managerial ethos feed each other in an achievement-oriented subculture such as the US Army. The following scenario is all too typical. An information system—System Y—is acquired on the basis of need for handling volume and speed of retrieval. Once the system is operational, management discovers that it can perform the tasks for which it was purchased in a fraction of a day. To justify acquisition, additional programs are created to "feed the monster" and establish impressive usage data. Within a year so much nonessential activity has been programmed that system "Y" is now barely adequate and a newly assigned manager initiates studies leading to the acquisition of

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system "Y," a newer machine with greater capacity. In effect, billions are spent in the name of economy, and inefficacy is fostered in the name of efficiency and progress. We are reminded of an in-house homily related some years ago by a rapidly fading anachronism in the modern Army—an old soldier. In commenting on the departure of Mr. McNamara and his whiz kids from the Defense Department, he said, "The bitch may be gone but the pups will run loose for years to come." Today, the pups have reproduced themselves.

The scenario sketched above is less than heartening, but we suggest that it is not unrealistic. It takes little imagination to project current trends a few years into the future. There we find an Army led, or rather managed, by technocrats who cannot communicate with soldiers who come from a society unwilling to support it with sons and daughters because the society believes the system will provide worldwide influence and security with no effort as long as it pumps money into the system. The society's leaders continue to arrogate unto themselves world power status but experience increasing difficulty in defining and executing the role. They will not pay the cost in resource commitment, human and material, to pursue long-term foreign policies, but they gladly pay an equally high price to equip their armed forces with the latest gadgetry. We have reluctantly reached the same conclusions that we reached in 1978. The Army, with general public approval, is narrowing its spectrum of employment choices to that of the least likely form of war. In the process, it is transforming itself into a resource-intensive creature that no one seems to want, but, at the same time, no one is willing to modify. Viewed in the context of increasing probability that it will be involved in a low-technology war in a remote corner of the world, the Army and, by extension, the other armed services are neither economical nor effective.

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### **ENDNOTES TO THE SIX-MILLION-DOLLAR G-3; ARMY PROFESSIONALISM IN THE COMPUTER AGE**

1. The article entitled "Fort Apache or Executive Suite? The US Army Enters the 1980s," was first presented at the New England Regional IUS Conference, Spring 1977, and was later published in *Parameters: Journal of the United States Army War College*, Volume VIII, No. 2 (July 1978) and in Richard Gabriel and Paul Savage, *Managers and Gladiators: Directions of Change in the Army* (The Hawkes Press, 1978).
2. For a definitional base of these terms, see Arthur Larson, "Military Professionalism and Civilian Control: A Comparative Analysis of Two Interpretations," *Journal of Political and Military Sociology*, Vol. II, No. 1 (Spring 1974). Larson uses Janowitz and Huntington as the basis for the two interpretations.
3. US Department of the Army, *Operations, Field Manual 100-5* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1976), p. 1-1.
4. William E. DePuy, "Technology and Factors in Defense in Europe," *Army*, April 1979, p. 16.
5. General William Westmoreland, Chief of Staff of the Army, speech before the Association of the United States Army, Washington, October 14, 1969.
6. James G. Miller, *Living Systems* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1978), Chapter 5.
7. Paul Dickson, *The Electronic Battlefield* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1976), pp. 195-213.
8. In Europe some of the more sophisticated equipment is maintained by civilian technicians at a cost of \$61.53 per hour, to include road time. This tends to support the trend that was identified in 1977 by Charles Moskos "The Emergent Military: Calling, Profession, or Occupation?" *Parameters: Journal of the United States Army War College*, Vol. VII, No. 1 (1977).
9. Headquarters, United States Army Training and Doctrine Command. *Analyzing Training Effectiveness, TRADOC Pam 71-7* (December 1975), Chapter 2.
10. General William E. DePuy, Commanding General, Training and Doctrine Command, "The Army Training System Overview," speech made at conference AFTCON IV, May 24, 1977.

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11. Morris Janowitz and Charles Moskos, "Five Years of the All-Volunteer Force: 1973-1978," *Armed Forces and Society*, Vol. V, No. 2 (Winter 1979), p. 192.
12. For a full discussion of the job definition of the various grades of officers, see US Department of the Army, *A Review of Education and Training for Officers* (Washington: HQ DA, June 1978). Hereafter cited as RETO.
13. Army Training Study, "Training System: A Program," unpublished paper presented by BG Fredrick J. Brown, Director, Army Training Study, IUS Southwestern Regional Conference, April 1978, p. 4.
14. RETO, Vol 1, p. III-16.
15. Robert L. Katz, "Skills of an Effective Administrator," *Harvard Business Review* (January-February 1955).
16. See Franklin Margiotta and Frank Tantillo, "New Initiatives in Air Force Mid-Level Officer Education," unpublished paper presented at the Mid-West Regional IUS Conference, March 1978. The Navy had also established a series of preparatory courses for officers assigned to certain classes of ships.
17. RETO, Vol. II, Annex E, Appendix 3; see also William Hauser, "Leadership for Tomorrow's Army: An American General Staff System," *Parameters: Journal of the United States Army War College*, Vol. VIII, No. 3 (September 1978). Colonel Hauser was head of the Staff College Study Team of the RETO group.
18. Katz, p. 35.
19. According to a CGSC "analysis of CGSC graduates' assignments," September 24, 1976, less than 25 percent of graduates from the 1970-75 period were assigned at corps echelon or below.
20. See *Army Times*, April 9, 1979, p. 38, for a discussion of congressional attacks on fully funded graduate education. Although the figures vary from year to year, those categories funded by the Army for graduate education are usually in the hard sciences, operations research, or management.
21. Stephen Clement and Donna Ayres, "Monograph No. 8: A Matrix of Organizational Leadership Dimensions," *Leadership Monograph Series* (US Army Administrative Center, 1976), p. 55.
22. Ibid., p. 56.
23. G-1, VII Corps, "Committee Report: Role of the Company Commander," February 21, 1978.

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24. US Army War College *Study on Military Professionalism* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: June 1970), p. iv.
25. Douglas Kinnard, *The War Managers* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1977); see also Lewis Sorley, "Professional Evaluation and Combat Readiness: Some Observations of Current Practice," unpublished paper presented at the Southwest Regional Conference of the IUS, April 1978.
26. FM 100-5, Chapter 3, p. 2: "Each officer must be imbued with the idea that success will depend upon skill, initiative and imagination with which he seeks to accomplish the assigned mission within the intent and concept of his commander."

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